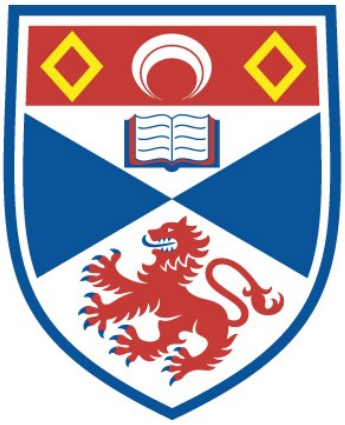
TACITUS'S CHARACTERISTIC EXPLOITATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING

Jean Cairistiona Morton

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of MPhil
at the
University of St Andrews



1983

TACITUS'S CHARACTERISTIC EXPLOITATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING

Presented for the degree of M. Phil. at the University of St. Andrews.

Jean Cairistiona Morton

October, 1982.

ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 – 1346

(a) I Jean Cairistiona Morton hereby certify that this thesis which is approximately 60,000 words in length has been written by me, that it is the record of work carried out by me and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

Date: 29 October, 1982 Signature:

(b) I was admitted as a research student under Ordinance No. 12 on 1st October, 1980 and as candidate for the degree of M.Phil on 29th April, 1981; the higher study for which this is a record was carried out in the University of St. Andrews between 1980 and 1982.

Date: 29 October, 1982 Signature:

(c) I hereby certify that the candidate has fulfilled the conditions of the Resolution and Regulations appropriate to the degree of M.Phil. of the University of St. Andrews and that she is qualified to submit this thesis in application for that degree.

Date: 8 November 1982 Signature of Supervisor:

In submitting this thesis to the University of St. Andrews I understand that I am giving permission for it to be made available for use in accordance with the regulations of the University Library for the time being in force, subject to any copyright vested in the work not being affected thereby. I also understand that the title and abstract will be published, and that a copy of the work may be made and supplied to any bona fide library or research worker.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. A.S. Gratwick, the late Professor R.M. Ogilvie, Mr. M.S. Smith, Dr. C.J. Carter and Mr. F.M.A.G. Jones for the help, advice and encouragement which I have received during the preparation of this dissertation.

Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to examine Tacitus's treatment of geographical material in his historical works, considering his sources, his methods and his intentions. In the first six chapters, each of which deals with a particular area which Tacitus describes, there is firstly a discussion of what information was available to Tacitus, and of the likelihood that he employed each source. This is followed by an examination of his purposes in including geographical references to the place concerned, then Tacitus's description is considered in greater detail in support of the purpose(s) suggested. Chapters 7 and 8 aim to put Tacitus's treatment of geography into the perspective of historiographical writing by showing the approach taken by the major surviving historians of the Classical period, and the growth of a convention of geographical description. There is an appendix, in tabular form, which outlines the geographical passages in each historian and the proportion which these occupy of the work of each author.

Contents

Introduction

In the eyes of Tacitus's critics, his use of geography is one of his greatest weaknesses. Frequent accusations have been levelled at the historian, that he is vague, ignorant, or even deliberately misleading his reader (1). The intention of this dissertation is to consider any sources for geographical or topographical information to which Tacitus may have had access, his manner of presentation of geography and his own idiosyncratic purpose for which this knowledge was used. My aim is to show that Tacitus was often carefully and deliberately selecting material which suited his intentions at any specific point, in order to leave a particular impression of both the place and the event in question.

Tacitus himself discusses his attitude towards geographical references as follows:

> nam situs gentium, varietates proeliorum, clari ducum exitus retinent ac redintegrant legentium animum: nos saeva iussa, continuas accusationes, fallaces amicitias, perniciem innocentium et easdem exitii causas coniungimus obvia rerum similitudine et satietate (2).

It can thus be seen that his first priority was the recounting of political history, and that military and geographical accounts played a secondary role only insofar as they complemented the primary thought. This is the pattern found throughout Tacitus's work: for example, Annals I and II describe Germanicus's campaigns in Germany, and, to a lesser extent, the country in which he is campaigning, but this is found only in the light of Tiberius's imperial power; the siege of Jerusalem in Histories V owes its detail to the fact that Titus was the commander. For this reason

there is perhaps some imbalance in the amount of space occupied by different areas, an effect which may also have been the result of disproportionate knowledge, or even of the course of history, as certain places come into the limelight and others remain in oblivion (3).

It will be seen, in Chapters 7 and 8, that to the ancient mind geographical description meant far more than a simple account of the topography, involving also such aspects as history, ethnology and even mythology. The conjunction of such topics was commonplace, and they were indeed regarded as inseparable facets of the one description, the human and the physical being closely related. The modern reader has quite different expectations from an author; he looks for precise factual detail on the terrain or area. However, in the tradition within which Tacitus was writing, complete accuracy was not demanded, and was in fact eschewed (4). So although it is at times irritating not to have a fuller picture of a place or area, and although it would be useful to know the exact site at which an event took place, it is unfair to criticise Tacitus for this as it is not a personal failing but rather a failing of the entire Greco-Roman tradition in which he participates.

Nevertheless, there is rarely much difficulty in following the course of the narrative through the details of geographical nature which Tacitus does give (5). Unlike Herodotus and the majority of his predecessors, his approach is to fill in a picture almost imperceptably through the description of events rather than breaking off into a separate episode. Yet there are times when this latter practice is adopted (6); but this does not restrict all topographical detail to one separate section, only gives the basic facts for the outline to be filled in by incidental remarks at a later point. Although geog-

raphy is not Tacitus's most important subject, it is rarely ignored completely, and is usually dealt with satisfactorily, from the angle of his contemporaries, and considering the greatly limited geographical knowledge generally held in the first century. The question of sources is discussed in each chapter in the light of the place with which the chapter deals. It is sufficient here to remark upon the shadowy nature of many areas and the difficulty in finding reliable information. Tacitus must often have been forced to assume ignorance in his readers of anywhere beyond the Italian frontiers, a fact which may help to account for his approach.

In addition to the restrictions of the convention of geographical digression, Tacitus was also bound by a further convention: that of annalistic historical writing, originating from the State records which were kept by the consular year. This compelled strict chronological order, and on the whole Tacitus follows this practice rigidly (7). Of necessity, the points at which he does digress leave the annalistic framework, since they deal with timeless matters such as geography or myth, or with past history. However, Tacitus, dealing as he is with events taking place over a length of time throughout the entire Roman Empire, is faced with the problem of fitting in contemporaneous happenings in different and often widely separated locations. It is in this that Tacitus's literary skill comes into play, as he carefully balances one area against another for deliberate effect, such as Germany and Judaea in Histories IV and V, or Germany and Rome in the Germania, yet still retaining the overall annalistic framework.

Tacitus's methods of introducing geographical material differ widely, but fall into four basic categories.

i) The standard excursus of the historiographical tradition. Examples of this are Agr. 10-13

(Britain); Germania, and Hist. V, 1-13 (Judaea).

ii) A brief descriptive sentence explanatory in the context, more parenthetic than separable, e.g. Ann. XII, 62-63 (Byzantium).

iii) Well-integrated incidental comment, found throughout, but particularly covering Germany and Rome. This prevents any interruption to the flow of the narrative.

iv) Passages summarising the state of affairs around the Empire, often introducing a book: e.g. Hist. I, 1-11; Ann. IV, 4-5. (8).

Tacitus varies his presentation along these lines, though the excursus tends to appear more in the earlier works than the later, when he prefers to integrate his material as far as possible into the surrounding narrative.

As well as approaching the subject of geography from different angles, Tacitus uses his descriptive matter for a number of different purposes. Although obviously the first requirement which geographical material fulfils is that of historical explanation, by making the course of events comprehensible, there are other uses, more subtle, to which it is put. Geography may have the effect of recalling other happenings, or other people, or even a particular thought or attitude first associated with a place or type of place. The method of description may appeal to the reader's emotions or his sense of the dramatic or the exotic; it may be highly atmospheric in nature, or may indeed be purely descriptive and factual. It may be intended to fulfil a literary role: structural or stylistic, splitting up a series of events or creating suspense. Frequently, the device of contrast is employed, or places and events are paralleled. Examples of all these can be found in Tacitus's writings, to a varied extent,

but in all cases, his use of geography is dependent upon the effect which he intends to give to the audience of whom he is constantly aware.

In what follows, I have taken some of the areas with which Tacitus is principally concerned, notably Germany, Rome and Britain, and also other places which occupy a lesser part of the text, yet which are representative of the typical Tacitean approach to geography, such as Capri and Byzantium. This selection is not exclusive: areas like Armenia, Northern Italy or the Bay of Naples could equally well have been chosen in order to display the same features.

The overall impression of geography which Tacitus leaves with his readers is of vivid glances, sometimes brief, sometimes lingering; though not often detailed, the image is graphically realistic, putting the historical content into a credible explanatory setting, without obstructing the course of events. The basic facts are accurate, on the whole, though Tacitus's aim is evocative rather than scientific; he is using geography to bring out all his own purposes and biases. In this, he has progressed far beyond the conventions of the tradition upon which he builds, and has produced an original and carefully executed method of approaching and exploiting geographical and topographical description.

Notes to the Introduction

1. c.f. for example Bunbury, E.H. (1879), II, 494 "destitute of the geographical faculty"; Furneaux, H. (1896), 31 "want of precision"; Cary, M. (1949), 515 "the most ungeographical" of historians; Mendell, C.W. (1957), 217 "sketchy and vague...no interest in precise geography"; Wellesley, K. (1969), 77 (see n.5 below).

2. Annals IV, 33. This is the closing part of an apology for the subject matter of the Annals- a constant series of suicides and political murders.

3. See Syme, R. (1958), I, 449 on the question of the unequal presentation of the several provinces. Note also the possibility that other areas may have received greater attention in the missing sections of Tacitus's work.

4. See for example Sallust's treatment of Africa, or the lack of detail in Caesar's account of Kent, where little topographical information is added to support the narrative.

5. Wellesley, K. (1969), 77 disagrees: "Tacitus...had an imperfect appreciation of the indispensability of clear topographical exposition for the good understanding of events."

6. c.f. Agr.10-13 (Britain); Hist.V, 1-13 (Judaea); Ann. XII, 62-63 (Byzantium).

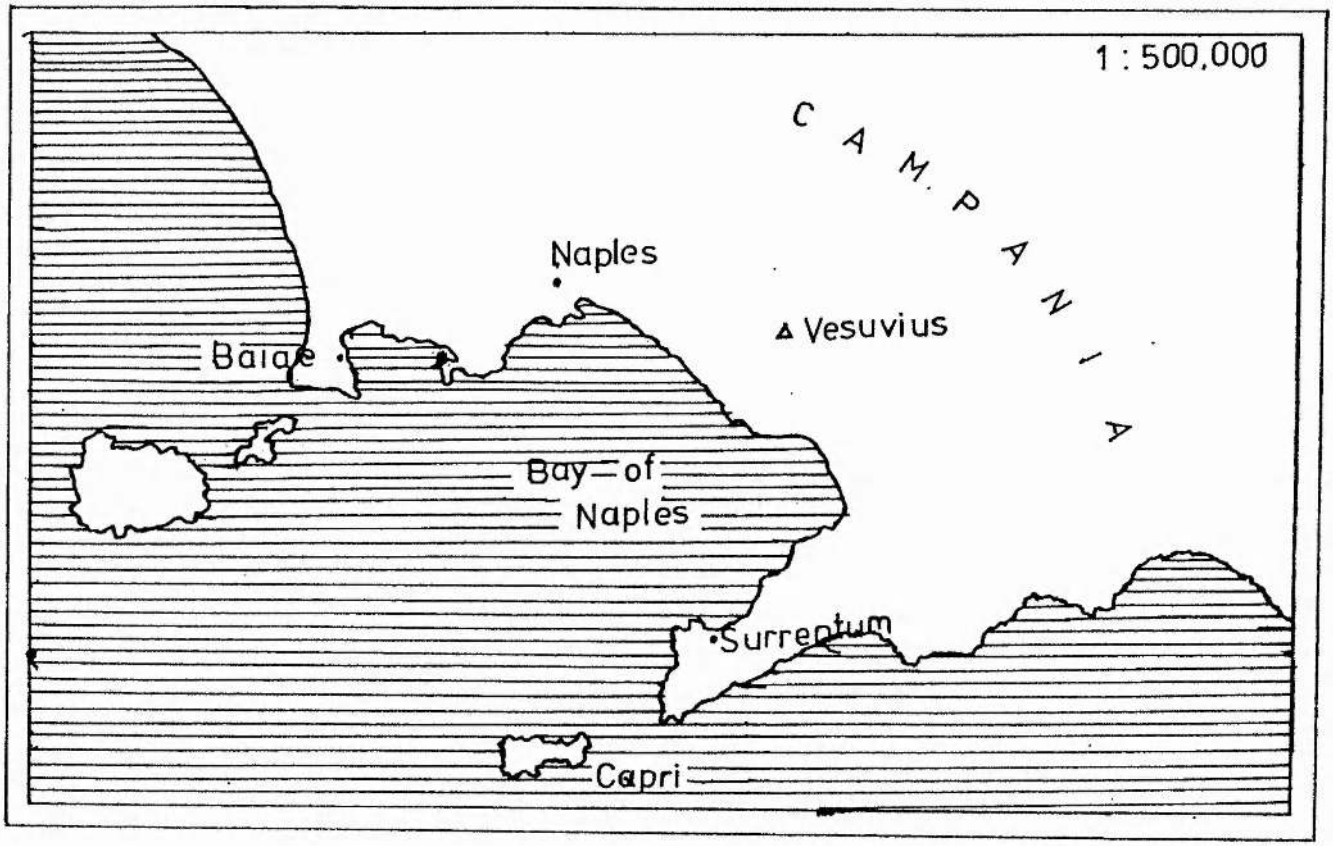
7. Although there are exceptions, for example Ann. XII, 29-40, where the events of several years are telescoped into one section. Tacitus feels it necessary to apologise for this:

   haec, quamquam...pluris per annos gesta, coniunxi ne divisa haud perinde ad memoriam sui valerent: ad temp-

orum ordinem redeo.

See also Hist.III, 46 and IV, 31, where Tacitus has first of all delayed the account of the German rising to Book IV, then has to summarise events in Germany preceding the Battle of Cremona already recorded in Book III.

8. Tibullo, G. (1969), 88, holds the view that these passages are intended to put all the events to come into perspective.


1 : 500,000
CAMPANIA
Naples
Vesuvius
Baiae
Bay of
Naples
Surrentum
Capri

Chapter I

Capri

Section 67 of the fourth book of Tacitus's *Annals* stands out as an isolated passage of pleasant descriptive writing within a framework of pessimism and tragedy. It is rare to find any type of topographical detail in Tacitus outside a military and - usually - provincial context; for this reason we must look at this episode closely in order to ascertain the reasons and intentions which the author had for its inclusion. The subject is Capri, provoked by Tiberius's self-imposed exile there in 27 A.D., and though the presentation is brief, it is nevertheless significant.

The small island of Capri would in fact have required little description for Tacitus's readers in Rome. The Bay of Naples had long been considered a place of relaxation in close proximity to the Urbs, and Tacitus, like his peers, must have known the island well. There is then no need to look for any sources for his references to it. This fact could be seen to remove any necessity for picturing the place at all, which again forces us to look further to find Tacitus's purpose here.

Firstly, however, we must consider what kind of attitude was held by Tacitus's predecessors and contemporaries towards Capri. There would seem to be two basic sentiments in any references which we possess to the Naples area, including Capri and Baiae, not conditioned by temporal factors. One is the picture of an area of immense beauty and peace, growing out of legend, the view we find in Virgil and Silius Italicus (1), backed up by Statius (2), who eulogises the area to his wife to lure her back from Rome, and Suetonius, who

describes Augustus's holiday in Capri (3). This view even persists in Martial (4). Baiae in particular was well-known for its hot springs of beneficial effect (5), and the region was famed as a spa, as well as a place suited to otium and retirement. One could perhaps make the comparison here with Eighteenth Century Bath and similar watering places. This perhpas developed into the second picture we are given, as otium encouraged luxus which in turn led to the immorality and vice so frequently associated with Baiae and Capri, strongly criticised by Seneca, and regretted by Propertius (6). Thus in the Early Empire we have a conflicting record of on the one hand a beautiful holiday place away from city life, and on the other a den of the worst possible vice and corruption (7). The only clear thought permeating all this is the equating of Capri with Tiberius's residence there (8), and this association would immediately occur to Tacitus's readers, along with the above ambivalent attitude. It is with full awareness of these reactions that Tacitus introduces Capri to his narrative.

It would however have been feasible for Tacitus simply to remark on Tiberius's departure for Capri at the appropriate chronological moment of his narrative (IV, 57) without going into detail about the nature of the island, totally unnecessary for a readership already acquainted with Capri. This is not a distant land with unknown qualities as are most other places described by Tacitus (such as Judaea, Germany, Britain), but an area full of Roman villas owned by members of the prosperous upper classes such as Pliny the Younger (9). So why did Tacitus include this description, if we rule out essential didactic reasons?

The answer lies in the contents and context of the passage, which suggest a number of reasons for this account of

Capri. It is immediately clear that Tacitus is providing variety and relief from what precedes this account, with a change of scene and of subject matter from prosecutions at Rome to inactivity in Capri, marked also by the change in style and the general approach. Yet despite this, the political implications are still present, for Tiberius remains as Head of State, even as a recluse. This episode tells us much about the character of the Emperor, even if it is in a biased, implicitly backhanded fashion. It becomes gradually more obvious that Tiberius is not looking for a home in which to spend a peaceful retirement, but rather a place from which he can safely control activity at Rome. It may be noted here that it was from Capri that the letter provoking the fall of Sejanus was sent (10), showing that there was no loss of control and that Tiberius knew what was going on. Here Tacitus is using Capri as a foil to Tiberius to show up his faults in contrast to the pleasant setting. Tacitus's political bias against the autocrat shows in this (11): he cannot show Tiberius as a harmless exile, but must indicate his culpable reasons for the move. At IV, 57 we have already been told that it is not only Sejanus's influences (Seiani artes) which have decided Tiberius, but also his own habits:

> saevitiam ac libidinem cum factis promeret, locis occultantem.

This colours the Capri episode from the start, even if it is so far only a hint of what is to come, and is laid aside during the intervening sections (12). Yet be section 67 we have been insidiously persuaded in our attitude to Tiberius to see the worst in him.

The shadow of Sejanus falls upon the whole of Book IV, even without direct reference. His political power is

reaching its zenith, but before this point we halt briefly to concentrate on Capri, retaining the suspense. The passage is well integrated into the context, following fluently on Tiberius's temple dedications in Campania. This is a momentary rest, a relief from the current situation in the city, and thus serves as a structural break as well as to characterise Tiberius. The irony lies in the fact that such a picturesque island, idyllic in the sense of Virgil's Eclogues or of Pompeian landscape paintings, should be chosen to throw light upon the Emperor's true personality (as seen by Tacitus); this means is effective in a way which the background of Rome could not achieve. Tacitus creates a vivid if rather idealised vignette of the island to which Tiberius is retiring, using all his linguistic artistry to conjure up an atmosphere of peace, beauty, serenity through solitude.

Into this picture intrudes Tiberius at the phrase sed tum Tiberius, and the illusion is shattered, as all the intrigues, vice and horror associated with the Principate and the capital enter Capri with him. The natural beauty of the island is spoiled by his numerous villas (twelve in all, with individual names- surely rather extravagant) and by his malum otium. There can be no return to what Capri was prior to this, merely a dream of what once was, as much a legend as the Teleboi of Virgil or indeed of Tacitus. The aesthetic contrast is appalling. This is only realised to the full in Book VI, 1, with its details of the extent of corruption and immorality which Tiberius has introduced into this idyllic setting. But the changed mood is already apparent in IV, 67. There is little subtlety in this, though many underlying suggestions back up the main point of contrast. Tacitus is showing his ars depingendi (13) to great psychological

effect, by destroying his vivid image immediately he has created it.

The principle of "savage contrast" (14) is an inseparable part of the intention of this passage. The episode is full of contrast of all types. We have already seen Tiberius set against the topography of the island. This method of apposition is found elsewhere in Tacitus too, where the terrain helps to give an impression of the protagonist, but this is normally used for favourable effect, as with Agricola, Titus or Germanicus (15), whose military exploits are set against the background of a hostile environment, which they conquer. With Capri, the opposite result is achieved so that instead of a heroic victor we are presented with an Emperor destructive and vice-ridden even in retirement. In the above examples there is always another figure to take into account: Domitian, Vespasian or Tiberius, who though not prominent influence the attitude of the reader. This is the role played here by Sejanus, though even he cannot offset the bad character of Tiberius. Capri is peramoena, but it is the amoenitas vitae (V,2) of Tiberius there which destroys this attribute. For this one evil deed Sejanus cannot be blamed: the responsibility lies of Tiberius alone.

Capri is attractive, unlike the German forests and the barrenness of Judaea, which are more typical examples of Tacitus's topographical description, but in this case the contrast is with Rome, and all the implications which that bears. Rome brings to mind the tension and fear of contemporary society, particularly as a result of Sejanus's mounting influence. By turning to Capri we forget momentarily the horrors of the past, which belong to another setting entirely,

and find a haven in this idyllic, rather unreal situation. The beauty is natural, with no human machinations behind it, enjoyable purely for its own sake, and the reader can revel in this.

Yet amidst this sense of relief we are confronted with the Emperor, striking harshly against the preceding description. We believed we had left all this behind; now we find that depravity attacks even the areas most remote in character from its homeland. Natural attractions are replaced by man-made luxus and moral looseness, virtue is replaced by vice, and Tiberius's presence removes the solitude and peace which ostensibly he sought in residing in Capri. The slightest mood of optimism, or even release from pessimism is repelled so strongly that the resultant sentiment is doubly painful than the earlier mood.

In considering this episode in greater detail, further understanding is gained of how Tacitus achieves these contrasts, and of the aims which he has in mind. The passage falls into two distinct halves, although at a closer look they are not so alienated as might at first appear. Tacitus leads into the account of Capri by describing Tiberius's journey from Rome to Campania to dedicate temples in Capua and Nola, as we were told in section 57 on his decision to leave Rome. He gives orders that he be left in peace, and enforces this, ironically, by military presence. Finding that he is still not sufficiently isolated he moves on to Capri, and with the mellifluous phrase: Capreas se in insulam we have a complete change of style. Here is natural peace, not peace sought through forcible means. The hardness of the preceding part of the sentence is strongly contrasted to what follows, as, with "delicate diction" (16), Tacitus rapidly sums up the at-

mosphere of the island. This is done by linguistic devices rather than by factual description of the topography, and as a result gives a clearer impression of what Tacitus means to convey. The pervasive s sound may be intended as calming, soporific and warm, instilling in the reader something of the gentle attraction of the island (17). The facts given cover Capri's distance from Sorrento, the nearest land; the view over the Bay of Naples, and its sheltered aspect by the mountains.

Capri's solitudo is its most important attribute, the noun being placed for emphasis at the beginning of the sentence; the alliterative and insinuating s is still continued in the phrase:

solitudinem eius placuisse

and after. The end of this sentence:

quoniam importuosum circa mare et vix modicis navigiis pauca subsidia; neque adpulerit quisquam nisi gnaro custode.

is harsher, implying Capri's inaccessibility, a development of the idea of solitude. The references in this section to Campania and Germany, as well as the contrast with Rome, emphasise this aspect of solitude. In Suetonius's account of Tiberius's move to Capri (18), the picture of the island is of a much more inaccessible place still, which also bears elements of hostility. Tacitus is not at this point wishing to give us this impression (which would destroy his contrast) but is still extolling the beauties of the island. Capri's inaccessibility leads to peace rather than danger, which at this stage is equated with Rome.

In the phrase importuosum...mare we find an echo of Sallust's description of the African coast (19), which is merely descriptive with no psychological overtones. Tacitus has picked

on a specialised and antiquated word meaning harbourless (20) to develop the loneliness and the unapproachable aspect of Capri. As the section proceeds, Tacitus becomes more poetic in his description of the fine weather experianced in Capri, again choosing his vocabulary as much for the sound as for meaning. Examples of this are favonium (a less usual term than Zephyrus) and the words pelago and peramoena, which each have poetical connotations. In fact, peramoena is a compound created, as far as we can tell, by Tacitus for this one occasion. It is a hapax term used to strengthen the meaning of the original, which in itself carries much weight of meaning. This poetical sense applies to much of the vocabulary in this account; this, along with the renewed alliteration, now on the letter p, adds to the image created. The sinuous effect of:

prospectabatque pulcherrimum sinum

brings this description to a climax, with a type of exaggerated and yet credible idealism.

The ominous reference to the eruption of Vesuvius returns us from this idyllic Arcadia to the plane of reality, with some reluctance, but immediately Tacitus counters this by recalling the shadowy romantic stories of the heroic past with the name Teleboi, lowering the mists over the island and its legendary past; he is not merely indulging his antiquarian interests which have been noted elsewhere (21).

Unfortunately, this image of a perfect haven cannot last, and now we reach the crux of the passage: from the words sed tum, in vivid contrast we return to the present from the distant past and the timelessness of nature. Tiberius takes over the island with his twelve villas, destroying the peace and calm, and the vocabulary and sense become mundane and unpleasant. In place of public affairs, the worst forms of moral

depravity take command, and the atmosphere is totally alien to the former mood. Even in the setting of Capri the fears and dangers of Roman politics and society protrude, as Tiberius's suspicions are encouraged even at a distance, the figure of Sejanus looms larger and more ominous, and we return to the situation as it was in Rome befor this brief escape into pleasantness. The true contrast is between the peramoenus and pulcherrimus aspects of Capri set against Tiberius, who is:

occultiores in luxus et malum otium resolutus.

The vice and tension which we believed we had escaped have returned, and the effect of this is far harsher than if Tacitus had continued straight on from section 66. We could accept Tiberius's faults in the context of Rome's treachery and murder, but now we blame him for destroying our illusions too. From this point onwards the mood is gloomy and pessimistic.

To prove this point, Tacitus dwells further on Tiberius's residence on the island in VI, 1, noting in passing (V, 2) the amoenitas of the Emperor's life there, a word deliberately chosen for its irony against the use of peramoena in the description of the island. VI, 1 evokes memories of the earlier account of Capri, now followed by a detailed and telling record of how Tiberius has altered the style of life on Capri, coming to a head in the phrase:

sellariorum et spintriarum ex foeditate loci ac multiplici patientia

a crude, hardened and angular description completely opposed to the nature of the island. This has been called "the scene of Tiberius's lowest degradation" (22), and gives a most unpleasant picture of the new Capri. In retrospect it can be seen that Tacitus has been hinting at the outcome from the start, subtly infiltrating our idealism with an undercurrent

of threat. Tiberius's character has been thoroughly painted for us in the earlier books; his reasons for living in Capri were outlined in IV, 57, even if forgotten temporarily by section 67. But even within the account of Capri other suggestions enter: political pressure to enforce his solitude (edicto), military presence (disposito milite, gnaro custode- a harsh sounding phrase in an emphatic position), fear leading to the state of recluse, by the lack of harbour, the inaccessibility, the overtones of threat now suggested by the pervasive s. Perhaps Capri is not so welcoming as first impressions implied. From Tiberius's initial decision (provoked by Sejanus (23)) to retire there the island loses its past charm, and even the reference to Vesuvius is portentous, as natural disaster to come overshadows the present destruction. It is almost as if Tiberius is being blamed for this disaster occurring so long after his death. So too in the preceding sections, the disasters at Fidenae and Mons Caelius are inseparably linked with the Emperor's name. Thus it may be seen that what appeared a casual reference has far deeper implications.

Since the description of Capri is so brief in relation to the surrounding material, despite its wealth of detail and nuances, it is necessary to ask how far it stands out in the context. Book III has less feeling of gloom (as far as this can be true of any of the contents of the Annals). The long drawn out compaign against Tacfarinas in Africa, which continually recurs in Books II-IV, the Thracian uprising (III, 38), and trouble in Gaul (III, 40) all reach a victorious solution; Drusus, Germanicus's replacement as the idol and hope of Rome for his future as Emperor, impresses the Empire by his behaviour (III, 56). However, it gradually becomes

clear that, even if all is well in the Provinces, the same is by no means true of the centre of the Empire. By the end of Book III and the onset of Book IV it is obvious that Sejanus's rise to power, balancing Tiberius's retirement, is a major theme in what follows, though so far little suggestion, if any is made of his ultimate downfall (covered in the missing sections of Book V). We hear only of the enormous extent of his influence. Political murders, suicides, informers all add to the gloom hanging over the Urbs, as do the death of Drusus (poisoned by Sejanus IV, 8), the collapsed amphitheatre at Fidenae (IV, 62) and the fireon the Caelian Hill (IV, 64), an evil omen for Rome, exaggerated by Tacitus's brief digression on its antiquity, and eventually leading into the section on Capri. This, in the context, is a respite, a relief, perhaps a breathing space.

However, it is after this that we realise that the earlier tragedies are nothing compared to what is to come: Sejanus's increasing power, his collapse, and the Reign of Terror which lasts to Tiberius's death, and beyond for the next few decades. Capri turns out to be not merely a relief and contrast to the surrounding material, but is indeed a structural method of showing Tiberius's move to the island as the axial point of his reign, as he and Sejanus show their true colours; his destruction of Capri, marked by the mid-point of this passage, parallels his destruction of all that is worth preserving, only fully seen after this episode.

Clearly then, much of Tacitus's reasoning in this section serves a structural purpose, a pivotal role, as well as variety from the conglomeration of political events, Capri being described in a lighter manner which in itself emphasises the tragedy of surrounding occurrences. The contrast is being made not only with Sejanus and Tiberius, but with almost all

that takes place at this time. Capri is in more than onesense a retreat, a place of solitude and escape from the perils of daily life in this third decade, and Tacitus is using all the literary means at his disposal to emphasise this, by creating an idyllic setting for a peaceful, safe life- a setting ruined by Tiberius. Prosecutions and murders in Rome can be accepted as the norm, if not forgiven; to spoil the beauty and peace of Capri is neither forgivable nor acceptable. This is Tacitus's aim: to show, through this pictorial epigram the two sides to the picture and to encourage this conclusion, proved by the events which are to come. Tiberius, on every level, is a destructive force, leaving behind him nothing of true value.

Notes to Chapter I.

1. Virgil Aen.VII, 735:

   Teleboum Capreas cum regna teneret

   Silius Italicus VIII, 541-542:

   Inarime, non antiqui saxosa Telonis
   insula, nec parvis aberat Calatia muris

2. Statius Silvae 3,5,100; 3,1,128.

3. Suetonius Aug.98.

4. Martial XI, 80:

   Litus beatae Veneris aureum Baias,
   Baias superbae blanda dona Naturae...

5. Livy 41, 16; Horace Ep.15, 2-7.

6. Seneca Ep.51; Suetonius Tib.43; Propertius El.I, 11; Cicero Pro Cael.35 and many other references. On the reputation of Baiae see d'Arms (1970) passim.

7. See Tacitus Hist.III, 76 on the link between amoenitas and vice:

   noctu dieque fluxi et amoena litorum personantes, in ministerium luxus dispersis militibus, de bello tantum inter convivia loquebantur

8. Dio Cassius 52, 43; Juvenal X, 93; Pliny N.H.3,6,12.

9. Pliny Ep.9, 7.

10. Juvenal X, 72:

    verbosa et grandis epistula venit
    a Capreis.

11. Grant, M. (1970), 283

12. Doubt is cast upon the truth of Tacitus's assertion that Tiberius's reasons for moving to Capri were immoral, on the evidence of the company he kept there. See d'Arms (1970),86-87.

13. Vianey, J. (1896), 68.

14. Syme, R. (1958), I, 349.

15. Agricola (Agricola) see ch. 3; Hist.V, 1-13 (Titus) see ch. 2; Ann.I and II (Germanicus) see ch. 5.

16. Syme, R. (1958), I,349.

17. Although in excess it would have been considered cacophonous. c.f. Wilkinson, L.P. (1963), 9+13. See also 25 on the recognised use of alliteration and assonance in Latin.

18. Suetonius Tib.40: Capreas se contulit...quod uno parvoque litore adiretur, saepta undique praeruptis immensae altitudinis rupibus et profundo mari
The topographical facts are more or less the same, but the style is vastly different, provoking a different reaction in the reader. Instead of contrasting the land with the personality of Tiberius, the character of the island is suited to and equated with Tiberius's unnatural vice.

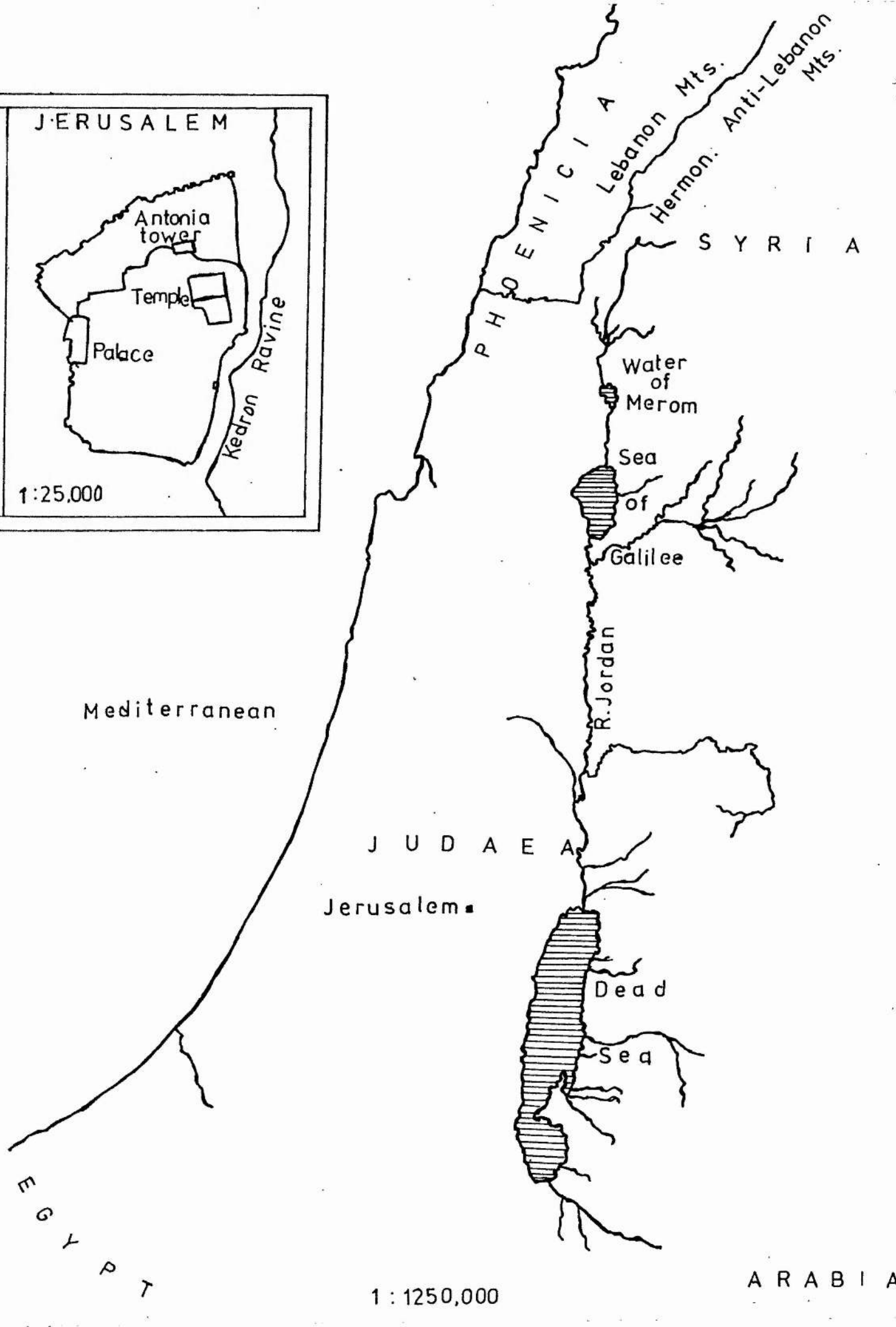
19. Sallust Jug.17:
mare saevom, inportuosum

20. Examples of importuosus appear also in Livy X,2,4; Pliny Ep.6,31,17; Pliny N.H.4,12,23.

21. Antiquarian interest is shown in many of the geographical sections e.g. in the Germania, the account of Judaea in Hist. V, and elsewhere.

22. Walker, B. (1952), 40; Compare Suetonius Tib. 43 on this issue of vice.

23. Ann.IV, 41:
Sejanus flexit ut Tiberium ad vitam procul Roma amoenis locis degendam impelleret...igitur paulatim negotia urbis, populi adcursus, multitudinem adfluentium increpat, extollens laudibus quietem et solitudinem quis abesse taedia et offensiones ac praecipua rerum maxime agitari.


J·ERUSALEM
Antonia tower
Temple
Palace
Kedron Ravine
1:25,000
PHOENICIA
Lebanon Mts.
Hermon. Anti-Lebanon Mts.
SYRIA
Water of Merom
Sea of Galilee
R. Jordan
Mediterranean
JUDAEA
Jerusalem
Dead Sea
EGYPT
ARABIA
1 : 1250,000

Chapter 2

Judaea

The Eastern Mediterranean province of Judaea was an area brought into prominence by the rise of the Flavian dynasty in 70 A.D., and hence is essential to the events described in the early books of the Histories. Books I to V are increasingly concerned with the Eastern Empire, amidst the preoccupations of Rome, Northern Italy and Germany. The East is symbolic of Vespasian and his family, as he becomes gradually more important, first as commander of the Judaean War, then as contender for imperial power, and finally as Emperor. As Vespasian grows in importance, so Tacitus concentrates more on the East and on the Flavians, culminating in the account of the siege of Jerusalem, the climax and conclusion of the war.

Preceding this, Tacitus describes the province in what is for him a lengthy episode, showing by its proportions the stress which the author places upon this siege. The contents of this "archeologia giudaica" (1) fall into conventional topics:

Sections	1	Contemporary setting: narrative
	2- 3	Origins of the Jewish race
	4- 5	Religion
	6- 8	Geography
	8-11	History i. Pre-Roman
		ii. Roman
		iii. Contemporary
	11-12	Topography of Jerusalem
	13	Prodigies; return to narrative.

Although these topics are standard, nevertheless each is tinged with the anti-Semitic prejudices of the author.

Tacitus's attitude is typical of his background, showing no sympathy for the Jewish race, no attempt to find unbiased sources, and a clear desire to emphasise the worst aspects and believe the worst accusations against this exclusivist group. His view of Judaea is coloured by this attitude: it is a land dogged by superstition:

> pervicaciam superstitionis (Hist. II, 4)

the breeding ground of the Jewish race, creatures on a different plane to the Romans, weak and credulous, and their country is imbued with the same qualities. The only good attribute conceded to Judaea is that it was the site of Vespasian's rise to power. Otherwise, the thought of Judaism led to hostility, contempt, incomprehension on Tacitus's part (2). This was by no means an idiosyncratic prejudice of his but rather a common reaction, spreading from Egypt and Greece into Rome, particularly under the Empire (3). The Jews were a close-knit, secretive and sectarian society, intolerant of other religions, and none of this was to increase their favour amongst their neighbours. Roman hostility could be quite outspoken (4) and could be summed up in Juvenal's description:

> quidam sortiti metuentem sabbata patrem
> nil praeter nubes et caeli numen adorant,
> nec distare putant humana carne suillam,
> qua pater abstinuit, mox et praeputia ponunt;
> Romanas autem soliti contemnere leges
> Iudaicum ediscunt et servant ac metuunt ius,
> tradidit arcano quodcumque volumine Moyses:
> non monstrare vias eadem nisi sacra colenti,
> quaesitum ad fontem solos deducere verpos.
> sed pater in causa, cui septima quaeque fuit lux
> ignava et partem vitae non attigit ullam. (Sat. XIV, 96-106)

The result of this separatism could often be violent, as with the rioting in Alexandria in 38 and 66 A.D. Elsewhere it was rather a matter of a total lack of acceptance with an undercurrent of hostility. It is in this context that Tacitus's

account of Judaea must be considered, since this anti-Semitic attitude was so widespread in contemporary Roman society.

Although Tacitus travelled to the East as Proconsul of Asia in (probably) 112-113 A.D., the Histories were written before this date; there is no evidence, either biographical or internal, to suggest that he was personally acquainted with Judaea. It is therefore necessary to examine any possible sources for the details given in this episode. Common knowledge would account for the basic facts about the country and the ways of its inhabitants, but Tacitus's description is too full to be a product of this alone. It may be remarked here that the bias shown by Tacitus is not merely anti-Semitic, but also pro-Flavian, understandable in the light of Histories I,1:

> dignitatem nostram a Vespasiano inchoatam, a Tito auctam, a Domitiano longius provectam non abnuerim.

This may reflect the bias of his sources, as well as his own attitude, and it is likely that the sources closest to him would be prejudiced towards the Principate.

Of the accounts of Judaea available to us, that of the Elder Pliny in his Natural Histories is probably the most immediately close to Tacitus through his acquaintance with the Younger Pliny (5). Pliny the Elder may actually have served under Titus in this Jewish War. The two men were contubernales in Germany some ten years before this war (6) and the chronology of Pliny's career makes it feasible that he should have seen military service in Judaea at this time. This proposal becomes more convincing when considered alongside the so-called Arados inscription of 1838:

ΙΗ ΒΟΥΛΙΙΙ
ΙΝΙΟΝΣΕΚΟΥΝ
ΧΟΝΣΠΕΙΡΗΣΟΡΑ
ΩΤΗΣΕΠΑΡΧΟΝΝΘ
ΩΝΑΝΤΕΠ·ΙΤΡΟ
ΥΙΟΥΛΙΟΥΑΛΞ
ΛΡΧΟΥΙΟΥΙΟΥΔΑΙ
ΡΟΠΟΝΣΥΡ
ΩΙΑΕΓΕΩΝΟΣΕ

Ἀραδίων] ἡ βουλ[ὴ καὶ ὁ δῆμος
Γάιον Πλ]ίνιον Σεκοῦν[δον
ἔπαρ]χον σπείρης [Θ]ρα[κῶν
πρ]ώτης, ἔπαρχον ΝΘ....
...ων, ἀντεπίτρο[πον Τιβε-
ρίο]υ Ἰουλίου Ἀλ[ε]ξ[άνδρου
ἐπ]άρχου [τ]οῦ Ἰουδα[ϊκοῦ στρατοῦ,
ἐπίτ]ροπον Συρ[ίας, ἔπαρχον ἰν
Αἰγύπτ]ῳ λεγεῶνος εἰ[κοστῆς
δευτέρας]

Taken from Mommsen, T. (1884), 664.

which appears to record a Plinius Secundus who held an equestrian command under Tiberius Julius Alexander, one of Titus's officers at the siege of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Mommsen and Fabia (7) have examined the evidence in detail, concluding that Pliny was indeed present at the siege, although other scholars disagree (8), on the grounds that other names could equally well be inserted into this inscription besides that of Pliny. If indeed Pliny can be equated with the commander of the Arados inscription, he would have been an ideal source for Tacitus's report of the Jewish war.

However, in the Natural Histories, he is only concerned with the geography of Judaea (9). His account is brief and limited in scope, except for the description of the Dead Sea, which may have been used by Tacitus, and it contains little ethnographical material. Jerusalem is referred to in a single sentence. Pliny is aware that there are pleasant features in Judaea, in contrast with the Tacitean tendency of blackening a description, such as the palm-groves at Jericho, the upper reaches of the Jordan, and the towns by the Sea of Galilee. Each author presents the identical facts slightly differently to fit his own purposes. So although Tacitus may have adopted some material from the Natural Histories, this did not give him any ethnographical detail, nor any information on Jerusalem, and hence cannot be considered a major source.

Judaea seems to have been an area of little interest or importance to earlier geographers and historians, who tended

to concentrate upon other larger areas of the eastern world, such as Persia; in any case, the contents of this episode suggest a source from within Judaea, probably of a date not far removed from the period concerned. The Old Testament books could have been used for details of the history and religious practices of the Jews, but Tacitus's recording of these is so twisted that any direct use is inconceivable, even if he had overcome the problem of language (Hebrew). It is far more likely that he used a non-Jewish source which had confused details heard at second hand. For this reason, Flavius Josephus, a Jew who played an active part in the Jewish resistance to Vespasian and Titus, cannot have been a major source in either his Antiquitates Judaicae (pub. 93-94 A.D.) nor his Bellum Judaicum (pub. late 70's A.D.). Despite being a Flavian protégé, he never lost his pro-Jewish sentiments. However, some similarities can be found between Tacitus and Josephus in his geographical sections, for example B.J. IV, viii and Tacitus Hist. V,6 (Dead Sea) or B.J.V, iv and Hist.V, 11-12 (Jerusalem) yet not close enough to be considered of direct transmission.

The geographer Strabo (c.64 B.C.-c.21 A.D.) describes Judaea in a lengthy passage at XVI, 2, 34-46, which bears some resemblance to Tacitus such as in the origins of the Jews (Egyptians), similar in name, not in the recounting; or the account of balsam, or the Dead Sea. Much of his material is taken from Posidonius. Tacitus may have used Strabo selectively but this cannot be confirmed.

Moore (10) suggests that in his account of the Jews, Tacitus followed the Alexandrian historians Chaeremon and Lysimachus, the latter particularly in the case of Moses' contribution to Jewish history and religion. Such a source would explain the corruption of the orthodox account, since the

Alexandrian Greeks were so hostile to the Jews, although the works of these historians must have been relatively obscure, and we cannot be certain that Tacitus had come across them.

Of works which we know to have existed, even though now lost, some are of great importance to this question of sources. Pliny the Elder composed a historical work a fine Aufidii Bassi, which, in the light of what has already been stated about Pliny's career, and the fact that it probably covers the years 44-71 A.D., could have been an important source for Tacitus. It was written soon after the completion of the War, and if indeed Pliny participated in the events he describes, we would expect him to have given a full account of the country in his usual prolific style. Since according to the Younger Pliny this history preceded the Natural Histories (11), any geographical or ethnographical information would not be repeated in the later work, and this fact would explain the lack of detail on the Jews and above all on the capital Jerusalem, just as the presence of geographical material in the Bella Germaniae would explain its absence in the Natural Histories. The observant and kleptomanic Pliny would have absorbed many details such as we find in Tacitus.

Another possible source for Tacitus's information is M. Antonius Julianus, as advocated by Thiaucourt, Jansen and Paratore (12). This man is mentioned by Josephus (B.J. VI, 238) as procurator in Judaea in 70 A.D., and may be the same person as the Antonius Julianus referred to by Minucius Felix (13) as an historian of the Jews. If so this would probably be a military account of the War, a type of source used by Tacitus elsewhere (e.g. Messalla, Corbulo) although probably of limited use for this episode prior to the description of the siege.

Julianus had strong anti-Jewish fellings, however, and was in the province during the relevant period. Josephus's opponent, Justus of Tiberias, also wrote an account of the Jewish War but this is even less likely to have been used by Tacitus.

One group of writings of immense importance for Tacitus was official records. Tacitus has elsewhere in his historical works acknowledged his use of these, particularly the acta senatus (14), so that we can be sure that he did use these as source material. Yet even more important in this case was what had become a standard practice of imperial acts being recorded in commentarii. These were official in nature, and there is little doubt that both Vespasian and Titus composed and published accounts of their actions in Judaea. Josephus appears to have used these commentarii too (15), and they may well have been accessible in the libraries at Rome. Some description of Jerusalem must have been included in these reports, which could have been assimilated into Tacitus's account of the siege and of its object (16). Their relevance would apply then more to the actual account of the siege itself than to the geo-ethnographical prelude, just as with the other military accounts known or conjectured.

It seems than as if Tacitus must have used an amalgam of sources, coloured constantly by his willingness to believe and quote the worst alternatives. There is a strong possibility that Pliny may have left a full account of Judaea in his history a fine Aufidii Bassi, taken from his own observations during military service in the country, providing the geographical background for Tacitus. The religious information may be a mixture of misunderstanding of Hebrew scriptures, anti-Semitic rumour and the prejudiced writings of the Alexandrian Greek school. Memoirs of serving commanders, including the imperial

commentarii, and the official records kept in Rome, would have been used for the narrative to follow rather than for this preparatory sketch of Judaea and the Jews. It can never be certain which authors were used for this passage, only that Tacitus used the material which he had collected in a way intended to throw a bad light on the Jews before describing their downfall under Titus's command.

The primary intention of this episode, as in all such episodes, is to clarify the events about to be described, by fitting them within a setting. This does not preclude the likelihood of further aims and ideas stemming from the contents of this passage. Syme calls Hist.V, 1-13 a "Sallustian excursus... a necessary prelude to the siege and destruction of Jerusalem" (17). The siege is the first event in Judaea to be fully covered by Tacitus, and therefore this is an apt moment at which to include a description summarising the character of the land and people of Judaea, so that the reader can understand what kind of enemy the Roman army is facing. The siege of Jerusalem is the culmination of the Jewish War, which has so far received little attention. Here Tacitus defines the military target, the problems facing Titus in his tactical planning. A knowledge of the topography of Jerusalem is essential, so that we can realise that it is a well-defended site, difficult to attack. As a result of this explanation, Titus himself is shown in a good light, as he succeeds in what has been stated to be a difficult task, the reduction of Jerusalem.

This leads on to the question of political intentions throughout this episode. Tacitus's pro-Flavian bias has already been mentioned. The Flavians in the East have been a theme

simmering since Book I of the Histories, and from IV, 81 have been the sole source of attention. The reigns of Vespasian and Titus, and indeed the early years of Domitian's reign, were prosperous and peaceful, pe haps implicitly compared to those of Nerva and Trajan (the period of composition of the Histories), and in strong contrast to Nero and the later years of Domitian's reign, already frequently hinted at during this narrative. The Flavians in control at this point though are a 'good' dynasty, worthy to command, and worthy of Tacitus's support.

Thus we are made to think well of the Flavians, and badly of the Jews, by the portrayal of each and by the inherent contrasts within this passage. At the same time, Tacitus is indulging his interest in the exotic: having already described the cult of Serapis (IV, 81-84), he moves on to the weird practices of the Jews, totally alien to any other contemporary religious movement. We are then shown two very different pictures of exotic cults, intended to arouse the reader's imagination, and, in the case of the Jews, disgust. By its unusual nature, the episode brings variety and colour within itself as well as in its context, as a relief from military affairs. The resultant picture is a vivid image of anti-Semitic beliefs, based on the view of an unpleasant land with burnt, empty plains and stagnant lakes, an incomprehensible and fanatical people, whose only asset is a strong capital, which has now met its match in Titus.

To achieve this, Tacitus uses his language carefully, either to produce an atmospheric scene with particular overtones, as with the Dead Sea, or to provide internal variety, or simply to enhance the prejudiced attitudes which he wishes to evoke. Most of all, by diverting attention in this way, he retains suspense for the moment when he actually reaches the account of the

siege. Even though we already know the ultimate fate of Jerusalem, Tacitus's dramatic skills can retain the suspense fully up to the final sections of the narrative, which are heightened all the more for the delayal of the action.

Nevertheless, some of the most important points which Tacitus intends to make are achieved by means of contrast: area against area, person against person, even area against person. Most obviously, there is the constant setting of East versus West (18), as represented by Judaea and Germany, with Rome at the centre and yet in the background. This alternation works on several levels: geographical and human. But on the most basic level, the east-west alternation provides a means of structuring the history of a single, very full year. The implications of each part of the Empire are very different, in a military, topographical, ethnographical and psychological sense.

The distance between the two is bridged by Rome, which provides yet another contrast. Germany is a dangerous, unknown and forbidding country, full of impassable rivers and huge forests, with unpredictable climate and hostile seas; Judaea is hot, unpleasant open, infertile, almost unworthy of attention, and certainly no threat to the power of Rome; the imperial capital stands between these two extremes, at what Tacitus considers to be the correct balance. As Germany is in ascent, and Judaea declines (19), Germany presents the threat, whereas Judaea is weak, spineless, without even a single commander to draw the subversive elements together. The German search for libertas, so representative of Tacitus's view of the western Empire (20) is, in the Jews, replaced by an acceptance of servitude, an apathy brought about by subjugation, a total lack of fighting spirit. This is no fit enemy for the Roman might; Tacitus's respect for the Germans and Britons becomes much more

comprehensible through this contrast.

In either case, the people's character is equated with the character of their country, so that any remark on either aspect reflects directly upon the other. The respect for Germany and the Germans is the complete antithesis of Roman distaste and scorn for the Jews and their land. This applies equally to all aspects of their daily living: German religion is virile and akin to the old Roman beliefs; the Jews are superstitious, following a creed closer related to the new cults of the East pursued by Roman women, than anything worthy of belief. The Germans have a history of militarism, even defeating the Romans; the Jews are constantly being subjugated or cast out, but are most stubborn in retaining the elements of their culture which are the most abhorrent to their neighbours. Their own intolerance makes others intolerant towards them. By the close proximity of the two races in Tacitus's text, these great contrasts between the Germans and the Jews stand out vividly, producing a strong reaction in the reader, in favour of the Germans and hostile to the Jews.

Yet even within the episode on the Jews we find contrasts, as for example in the descriptions of the Dead Sea (sections 6-7) and Jerusalem (sections 11-12). The Dead Sea and its neighbouring plains are indeed dead, empty, haunting and unnatural. Jerusalem is a strong citadel, defended by natural and man-made defences, and the remaining core of resistance. By making this contrast, Tacitus is serving two purposes: the building up of an unpleasant picture of the Jews and Judaea, and yet at the same time not wishing to concede that Titus has no real threat against him, nor fear of reversal. In emphasising the strength of Jerusalem, Titus has a target worthy of him and his soldiery, and only thus can the success of the siege be considered a genu-

ine victory, and can Titus be awarded a triumph for his role as military commander. For this reason, Tacitus gives a detailed account of the capital and her defences.

The importance of Titus throughout this passage and throughout the book cannot be gainsaid. Tacitus states as much in the single sentence:

> hanc adversus urbem gentemque Caesar Titus... aggeribus vineisque certare statuit (Hist. V, 13)

which appears at the close of the descriptive material, as if to explain the purpose of the foregoing sections. But the emphasis on Titus began in the first sentence of the book. His shadow and influence has fallen over Judaea as Vespasian before him; he is the hero of the moment, on whom all attention is focused, knowing that victory, and ultimately, imperial power will be his. In the same way, Vespasian gathered attention from early on in the Histories, approaching his own imperial destiny. Tacitus is carefully judging his presentation of the Flavians, with his own particular bias (or perhaps not so much an individual bias as a general belief, to judge from the parallel accounts of Suetonius in his lives of Vespasian and Titus, and of Josephus in the Bellum Judaicum).

Beginning with Vespasian (IV, 81-84) Tacitus dwells on the prophetic omens which led the way to his assumption of power, showing that the Empire is his destiny, as he fulfils the promises of Serapis and the prophesies of the Jewish Messiah. His reign has brought an end to civil discord, yet even as emperor he is modest (seen in his reluctance to attempt miracle cures in IV, 81) and his interest in things religious is expressed by the account of the god Serapis (IV, 83-84) which is also in apposition to the Jewish cult as described after this.

Instead of proceeding straight to Judaea from Vespasian

at Alexandria, Tacitus interrupts the narrative by diverting to Domitian in Italy (IV, 85-86). Though brief, these two sections ascribe quite a different character to the Flavian household, for they are tinged with apprehension, hinting at what is to come in the reign of the final Flavian ruler. This is not the first time that such implications have been made. In IV, 51-52. Domitian's evil character is alredy suggested:

> Vespasianus...adversam de Domitiano famam accipit...

and does not augur well. Tacitus ends Book IV by describing Domitian's dissimulation:

> quo velaret animum et fratris se aemulationi subduceret, cuius disparem mitioremque naturam contra interpretabatur (IV, 86)

This leads straight into Book V and the account of Titus preparing for the siege. By separating the sections concentrating on Vespasian and Titus by the two sections on Domitian, the threat of Domitian's character stands out all the more against the nature of his father, and, particularly, of his brother. In consequence, Titus gains in stature, by Tacitus's using Domitian as a foil (21), all of which adds to the build up of the climax with the fall of Jerusalem. Titus is suited to a hero's role, and fulfils that role to his utmost. Domitian is destined for quite another role, and it needs no more than a mention to remind the reader of this Flavian's future.

Thus, Tacitus's practice of contrasting places or people, whether races or indivinduals, plays a vital part in his manner of presentation, to show his intentions more vividly, since the contrasts are often striking and dramatic, meant to draw a particular reaction from the reader, which will affect his attitude to the ensuing narrative.

By considering the material given in these sections in greater detail, the above themes and purposes can be emphasised more strongly. In fact, the ideas are entwined in almost polyphonic fashion, through Tacitus's artistic skill, as shall appear.

Tacitus begins Book V by clarifying the chronology of events in Judaea, which occur at the same time as the uprising in Germany which has preoccupied the reader in Book IV:

eiusdem anni principio

This gives the chronological setting, immediately followed by the geographical and hitorical setting:

Caesar Titus, perdomandae Iudaeae delectus a patre

showing Titus's future imperial role as one of the Caesars, and recalling his father's present position. Throughout the section, the military support behind Titus is stressed and we are left in no doubt that he will succeed in this venture. The striking word perdomandae, an intensification possibly fashioned by Livy, means to tame or subjugate completely, and is carefully chosen to fit the past and future history of the Jewish race. Instead of rebellious troops in Germany, the legions are united behind the Flavians, as well as the allied forces of the locality. Tacitus implies that Titus's own pleasant nature is responsible for this enthusiasm:

comitate et adloquiis officia provocans ac plerumque in opere, in agmine gregario militi mixtus, incorrupto ducis honore.

This is the standard picture of a good general, who mixes with the rank and file without detracting from his authority (22). Both Titus and his father are modest men, almost in the Republican mould (marked by privatis utriusque rebus militia clarus), even if it is suggested that Domitian is quite the reverse (IV,

86). So too Titus's approach to Jerusalem is a model of correct military behaviour:

> composito agmine, cuncta explorans paratusque decernere, haud procul Hierosolymis castra facit

Tacitus is deliberately building up this over-perfect image of Titus, for the reasons already stated above.

Section 2 begins the account of Judaea by explaining its purpose:

> sed quoniam famosae urbis supremum diem traditurі sumus, congruens videtur primordia eius aperire.

The first few words are the key, for to Tacitus the fall of Jerusalem is of great importance, not only as a fate merited by this obnoxious race, but as a significant military victory for Titus. famosus is an ambiguous word suggesting notoriety as well as fame. The use of diem is again intended to reflect on Titus, for in brevity of time it suggests a rapid conquest.

The primordia of the Jewish race occupy the whole of sections 2 and 3. Tacitus conjectures six possible origins for the Jews:

i. Cretan refugees who fled to Libya in the age of legend, on etymological grounds (Idaei-Iudaei). Also possibly Sabbath=Saturn's day (23).

ii. Evacuation of surplus population of Egypt in the reign of Isis, led by Hierosolymus and Judas (24).

iii. An exodus from Ethiopia in the reign of Cepheus.

iv. Assyrian occupation via Egypt, a suggestion found also in Josephus (25)

v. Descent from the Homeric race of the Solymi (26) on the basis of the Latin name of the capital: Hierosolymus.

vi. Expulsion of leprous Egyptians by the king Bocchoris, led to Judaea by Moyses.

None of these origins is flattering to the Jews, and Tacitus is insidiously adding to his anti-Semitic sentiments by suggesting that the Jews have always been undesirables, refugees, outcasts, lepers. None of these eastern nations commands much respect, and the only exception in this list is that of a Homeric origin. However, Homer's work concerns mythological rather than factual evidence, and Tacitus, by deliberately making this suggestion before the final proposal, that of outcast lepers, places the emphasis on the latter thought, which he continues to expand in still less favourable terms. This idea was probably the most widespread belief, since it is also found in Diodorus, Trogus Pompeius, Lysimachus and Apion (27). The accumulative effect of tabe, foedaret, purgare and invisum deis leaves an alien impression, and even in their miseries the Jews are shown to have no stoical forbearance, no acceptance of their lot, only miserable self-pity. Although this account roughly follows the Old Testament story of the Exodus, the emphasis is totally different; each element is twisted, such as Moses' statement:

> ne quam deorum hominumve opem expectarent utrisque deserti

which no Jew could have recorded. Tacitus assigns the salvation of the exiles not to any god, but to wild asses. Even the land through which they travel is hostile desert with vastis locis, their route is fortuitum. No attempt is made to locate this route, nor their eventual destination, save the reference to the place where urbs et templum dicata.

Having introduced Moses to the narrative, Tacitus proceeds to describe the religious laws which he inaugurated:

> quo sibi in posterum gentem firmaret

Jewish beliefs are still further distorted, in much the same way that later the Christian sacraments are twisted and misunderstood (28). Tacitus is giving an outsider's explanation of the strange practices of the Jews, such as fasting, unleavened bread, avoidance of pork, and the seventh day of 'idleness'; this reflects the attitude of contemporary society, and though it may be another instance of Tacitus's interest in exotic religions (29), the contempt expressed here is unparalleled elsewhere in his work. Section 5 deals more with the effects and influence which the Jews have had on society throughout the Roman Empire. This is a harsh paragraph, saturated with hostility (sinistra foeda, pravitate valuere; adversus omnis alios hostile odium; separati; discreti), and in summary:

inter se nihil inlicitum.

Judaism can be compared favourably to no other faith, not even the licentious cult of Liber, and Tacitus's final conclusion is that it is absurdus and sordidus, keeping the Jews in subjection.

After such a vehement attack on the Jewish way of worship, Tacitus moves on to a description which outwardly seems factual and unbiased: the geography of Judaea. Logically, he prefaces his account by locating Judaea in relation to the better known countries of the East: Arabia, Egypt, Pheenicia and the Mediterranean, and Syria. Pliny the Elder (30) and Josephus (31) approach the subject similarly, though they proceed to treat the area in much greater detail than Tacitus, as also does Strabo (32). There are similarities between these accounts, in the descriptions of the best known features such as the Lacus Asphaltites or the Sodom plains. Tacitus is distracted by the thought of balsam, which he describes in Pliny-like manner (33),

concentrating on its medicinal properties. Returning to the topography, Tacitus makes an erroneous reference to Mount Lebanon as the highest mountain, since in fact the highest peak, Mount Hermon, occurs in the Antilebanon range, running parallel and to the east of the Lebanon range. Perhaps Tacitus was confused by the similarity of name, for Pliny (V, 77) distinguishes the two. It is a natural mistake to make, and of no importance to the events about to be described, which occur far to the south. The source of the Jordan is actually Mount Hermon, but the rest of its course is accurately described:

> nec Iordames pelago accipitur, sed unum atque alterum lacum integer perfluit, tertio retinetur

locating in turn the Water of Merom, the Lake of Gennesaret (Sea of Galilee) (34) and the Dead Sea (Lacus Asphaltites). The names are omitted as unnecessary. There follows a detailed description of the third lake, the Dead Sea, not of direct relevance to the narrative except for its proximity to Jerusalem and Masada, the remaining Jewish strongholds, but important for other aspects which can be drawn from it. Initially, it is an interesting natural phenomenon which has attracted the attention not only of Tacitus but also of Pliny, Josephus and Strabo (35). These authors treat it as a curiosity rather than an unpleasant feature, the aspect emphasised by Tacitus in line with his anti-Semitic sentiment. Tacitus creates the reverse of a locus amoenus, achieving an impression of lifelessness and desolation by the accumulation of unpleasant vocabulary:

> sapore corruptior, gravitate odoris accolis pestifer, neque vento impellitur neque piscis aut suetas aquis volucris patitur.

The death-like and unwholesome tone is retained throughout this

section. pestifer in particular is a strong and striking word, summing up the whole context. Even the word inertes carries overtones of stagnant 'dead' waters. At this point it is apt to refer to Marchesi's comment (36): "un populo lugubre e lugubre pure il territorio", and to his remark that Tacitus's picture "suscita l'impressione di un paesaggio maledetto per una genta maledetta". That Tacitus intended such a strong comparison to be made here is probable; it seems most likely that he seized upon this opportunity to indulge in a piece of atmospheric writing which would reflect badly upon the Jews. Certainly he intended his readers to recognise in his description references to the Lacus Avernus in Virgil:

> spelunca alta fuit vastoque immanis hiatu,
> scrupea, tuta lacu nigro nemorumque tenebris,
> quam super haud ullae poterant impune volantes
> tendere iter pennis: talis sese halitus atris
> faucibus effundens supera ad convexa ferebat.
> (unde locum Grai dixerunt nomine Aornum.) (Aen. VI, 237-242.)

and Lucretius:

> principio, quod Averna vocantur nomine, id ab re
> impositumst, quia sunt avibus contraria cunctis...
> is locus est Cumas apud, acri sulpure montes
> oppleti calidis ubi fumant fontibus aucti...
> (de Rerum Nat. VI, 740-741, 747-748)

in which the Virgil especially bears overtones of the Underworld and death. Even in describing the bitumen industry for which the Dead Sea was so renowned Tacitus ascribes unpleasant practices which are fitting for such a place.

There is no relief when we leave the Dead Sea for the nearby plain, which is burnt and infertile as a result of a thunderbolt:

> fulminum iactu arsisse; et manere vestigia, terramque
> ipsam, specie torridam, vim frugiferam perdidisse.

(compare Genesis XIX, 24 for the Jewish account of Sodom and Gomorrah). Tacitus ascribes the infertility of the land to

the fumes of sulphur from the lake:

> ita halitu lacus infici terram, corrumpi superfusum spiritum, eoque fetus segetum et autumni putrescere reor; solo caeloque iuxta gravi

and the vocabulary used in this section is as loaded as that in the former sections (atra et inania, halitu, corrumpi, putrescere). Tacitus has heard the story of a divine punishment on this spot, and his attempt at scientific explanation does not remove this suggestion. His description is all the more horrific for the remark upon the former richness of the plain:

> campi quos ferunt olim uberes magnisque urbibus habitatos

now replaced by desolate burnt wasteland where nothing can survive. The linking of the present state of the plain back to the Dead Sea is intentional, recalling the unpleasant description of the latter. Unlike Pliny, who concentrates upon the attractive upper reaches of the Jordan, Tacitus deliberately ignores any pleasant features of Judaea to concentrate upon the Dead Sea and the infertile plains for almost all the space which he allots to geography. Strangely, Tacitus finishes this section with a mention of the River Belius, whose sands were used for glass-making. There seems no purpose in this unless it is meant to dispel the mood of gloom created by the previous descriptions, by returning to the normal and prosaic.

Section 8 begins with a remark on habitation in Judaea, with no detail, clearly intended to lead onto Jerusalem, the object of Book V, and the focal point of Judaea, the religious, political and strategic centre. Tacitus remarks briefly on the Temple, the external defences, the palace, and the inner defences which protect the Temple. These are the features which

would be known to Titus and face him as he approaches the city. However, Tacitus does not return here to contemporary events and the conduct of the siege, as one might expect, but digresses again into the past history of the Jews. It is as if the history of Judaea concerns Jerusalem alone, and as such all other settlements may be passed over disparagingly:

magna pars Iudaeae vicis dispergitur, habent et oppida

Jerusalem, Titus's objective, is the important place, the only site meriting notice.

Judaea was a constant troublespot, a point made here by Tacitus, and even under Roman control (from 6 A.D. onwards) remained unsettled, mainly as a result of religious differences. Only by destroying the Temple, the seat of all the upheaval, could any lasting peace be maintained. Vespasian's successes, flatteringly recorded by Tacitus in section 10, had left only Jerusalem to be subdued, to force the permanent submission of Judaea, and Tacitus now focuses on Titus and Jerusalem. It has already been stated that this will not be an easy task:

duro magis et arduo opere ob ingenium montis et pervicaciam superstitionis (Hist. II, 4)

the latter being almost as tangible a barrier as the former.

Jerusalem is descrined at some length in sections 11 and 12, though not so fully as in the account of Josephus (37). Pliny the Elder, as already stated, glosses over the subject by a reference to what was Jerusalem (38). Strabo, too, concentrates on aspects other than the capital (39). Tacitus's account is immediate and vivid, such as might be reported by an eye-witness at the siege. He leads into this by recounting events just prior to the siege and assault of the city, creatimg tension and excitement by reflecting the mood of the soldiers and of Titus himself:

poscebantque pericula, pars virtute, multi ferocia et cupidine praemiorum. ipsi Tito Roma et opes voluptatesque ante oculos; ac ni statim Hierosolyma conciderent, morari videbantur.

So all are prepared and enthusiastic for rapid action. Nevertheless, their object is formidable:

urbem arduam situ opera molesque firmaverant, quis vel plana satis munirentur

a striking comment on the strength of the fortifications. The build-up of this picture of insuperable defences continues:

duos collis in immensum editos claudebant muri per artem obliqui aut introrsus sinuati

interweaving the natural and man-made defences in a manner which redoubles the problems facing Titus. The walls have been skilfully constructed to take advantage of the natural features, but the topography alone forms a considerable defence, particularly to the north-west and the Kedron Ravine:

extrema rupis abrupta

making Jerusalem impregnable, as it seems, especially when viewed from the outside, as the Roman army now considers the task of assault.

Having described the outsider's view of Jerusalem, Tacitus takes the reader within the fortifications to see the internal strengths of the city: the inner walls surrounding the Temple, the centre of Judaism (egregium propugnaculum), not only a constant supply of fresh water (fons perennis aquae)but capacity for water storage. Tacitus cannot resist making the snide remark that the builders foresaw a history of warfare for the separatist Jewish race. So, as well as appearing impossible to attack, Jerusalem would take years to be reduced by siege alone:

cuncta quamvis adversus longum obsidium

It is paradoxical that such a strong defence should be the capital of a race as weak as the Jews. However, its strong points are weakened by the Jewish leaders, Simon, John and Eleazar, whose disagreements contributed to the downfall of the city, which could otherwise have resisted for much longer.

Tacitus's description of the city is accurate and full, backed up by other sources. For example, the over-abundant strength of the walls is stressed too by Josephus, the constant water supply is quoted in Old Testament records (40), the Temple was indeed the best defended spot (loco pollebat) which shows the importance placed by the Jews on the protection of their religion. It may be that Titus recorded his observations on entering the city in his reports. The two hills mentioned have caused some query, since Jerusalem has four hills (41), but it is logical to assume that Tacitus meant the hills of Moriah and Sion here, on which the Palace and Temple were sited, as the most strategically essential points.

Section 13 moves on to the question of prodigies, again related in hostile fashion against the Jews, who refuse to make atonement after the observation of omens. Tacitus refers to the Jewish messianic prophesies (42), which he appears to see fulfilled in the persons of Vespasian and Titus. This is a highly sacriligious suggestion to any Jewish mind, but whether or not Tacitus sees it as true, he is making this suggestion to prove the futility of Jewish religion and to reflect well upon the Flavians, whose rule began in the East, and in fact in Judaea itself.

Briefly remarking on the number of Jews besieged in the capital, Tacitus emphasises again their stubborn defiance,

determined in the face of fate to stand against Titus. So despite the weakness normally characteristic of the Jews, Titus is now meeting a courageous resistance from a large number of fanatics in a strongly fortified citadel:

> hanc adversus urbem gentemque Caesar Titus...certare statuit.

The background is complete, the scene is set, and Tacitus may now proceed to the description of the siege. We are in no doubt that Titus will conquer, though he has strong opposition from people and from site; our full support has been gained for his attempts.

Although this type of introductory description is not unusual, Tacitus's originality is shown in the way in which he integrates the episode into the context. Throughout Book IV of the Histories, the theme has been Germany and the revolt of Civilis, which occupies sections 1-37, 54-79, between which Tacitus returns to events in Rome and Africa. Though the civil war appears to be over, the Empire is still unsettled, particularly on the northern frontiers, and Civilis provides a major threat to imperial security. Germany predominates through the entire book, which culminated in a last minute victory for the Romans at Trier, but this is by no means the end of the revolt, as is made clear in section 79. It is at this point that Tacitus chooses to break off his narrative of action in Germany to concentrate instead on the Flavians in turn, allowing the figure of Titus to begin the military action in Judaea. So events in Germany are left in suspense: the outcome of Civilis's revolt is still in the balance. In the same way, Tacitus builds up the drama through his description of Judaea, then suddenly cuts this off after section 13 by an instantaneous removal back to

the Rhineland and the outcome of the Civilis episode. Thus he retains suspense a second time, for even though the reader has been informed that Jerusalem will fall (V, 2), nothing is so far known of the circumstances and manner of its end. Tacitus deliberately links the two areas to draw the contrasts already discussed, and by this process of sudden and unexpected juxtaposition disorientates the reader, cutting events short for dramatic effect. By interleaving the different areas, Tacitus makes his contrasts more acute, whether it be between geographical aspects, political attitudes, national identity and characteristics, or on a smaller level, such as the contrasts between Civilis and the leaders of the Jewish resistance, or between Titus and his military counterpart Cerialis (43). In each of these cases, the nature of the former shows up the weaknesses of the latter.

Tacitus's method of alternating between the various theatres of action may additionally be intended to reflect the parallel chronology of these events (eiusdem anni principio), so that without destroying the annalistic approach it may still be clear to the reader that these events are indeed taking place contemporaneously (44). By breaking off the recounting of one war to describe another the immediacy of each is clarified.

Also on this subject of parallel events it may be worth considering that in the light of Paratore's view that the Germania belongs with the Histories as an excursus to the German episodes (see chapter 5) (45), the Judaean account is meant to balance out the very similarly formed description of Germany in the monograph, the contents of which are in the same traditional format found in the earlier works of Tacitus (compare here Agr. 10-13) on the model of his predecessors.

The theme of imperial power dominates Books I to III of the Histories, but it is almost forgotten in concentrating on the revolt of Civilis, though this was itself spurred on by the unsettled state of the Empire. Jerusalem and Titus return us to this theme, but now in a forward-looking sense rathertthan back towards Nero and the earlier holders of the title of Emperor.

Yet throughout the Histories as they remain to us, the context is emphatically that of civil war and the lack of a firmly established ruler. Although the Flavians would appear to have filled that void, the revolts on either side of the Empire are worrying, and the stability of the Roman World is still not ensured. The capitulation and destruction of Jerusalem will mark the end of the Jewish mation; Rome too could have fallem, and indeed could still fall in the climate which caused the burning of the Capitol in III, 71. It was the internal dissentions of the Jewish leaders which caused Jerusalem's downfall, and the rival factions in Rome which caused the fire. Titus and his father may have prevented worse from occurring, but the third Flavian, it is already being hinted, is a threat to Rome, paralleling Nero whose reign led to his murder and the horrific wars which have occupied the early books of the Historiem. If Titus, justly, could destroy Jerusalem, could Domitian pose a similar threat to Rome?

It is unfortunate that the descriptions of the siege and fall of Jerusalem in Tacitus's account have been lost to us; it would be invaluable to know how he continued the various themes and contrasts through the narrative. Tacitus has intentionally omitted all but the briefest of comments on the progress

of the Judaean War to date, so that by accumulating material at one point it assumes a greater emphasis. By giving the background to the war and the necessary description of the land and people in a separate account, Tacitus will be able to pass straight on to the action around and in Jerusalem. Although every remark made on the Jews is tinged with anti-Semitic prejudices, Tacitus must not be blamed for repeating views so prevalent within his own society, nor for using those views to colour and strengthen the points which he wished to make, such as his pro-Flavian bias. He does have a tendency to exaggerate by all possible means to bring out the worst picture of the Jewish race that he can compile, with little attempt at objectivity. True to the historiographical tradition, he treats the land as inseparable from the nature of its inhabitants. His main aims in this episode are to instil various prejudices by his comments and the contrasts made, whether explicit or implicit, and to enhance the drama by retaining suspense over the outcome of the different troubles throughout the Empire. Almost every word in these thirteen sections of text add in some manner to these intentions, and lead us to expect a thrilling and dramatic report of Jerusalem's downfall.

Notes to Chapter 2

1. Paratore, E. (1951), 596

2. c.f. Ann.II, 85: actum et de sacris Aegyptiis Iudaicisque pellendis factumque patrum consultum ut quattuor milia libertini generis ea superstitione infecta quis idonea aetas in insulam Sardiniam veherentur;
Ann.XV, 44: repressaque in praesens exitiabilis superstitio (Christianity) rursum erumpebat, non modo per Iudaeam, originem eius mali...
c.f. also Suetonius Tiberius 36

3. On the subject of anti-Semitism in the ancient world, see Jansen, A.M. (1949), 183-186; Sherwin-White, A.N. (1967); Grant, M. (1973).

4. See for example Quintilian III, vii, 21: et est conditoribus urbium infame contraxisse aliquam perniciosam ceteris gentem, qualis est primus Iudaicae superstitionis auctor.
Juvenal Satires III, 14; VI, 542-547,
Martial Epigrams VII, 55, 7-8:
sed quae de Solymis venit perustis
damnatum modo mentulam tributis.
VII, 82, 6: verpus erat

5. Known from the extant correspondence from Pliny to the historian.

6. Pliny, N.H. praef. 3: et nobis quidem qualis in castrensi contubernio! (to Titus as dedicatee)

7. Mommsen, Th. (1884), 644-648; Fabia, Ph. (1892), 149-155.

8. Syme, R. (1958), 178.

9. Pliny, N.H. V, 70-73.

10. Moore, C.H. (1979), 176 n1.

11. Pliny the Younger Epp. 3, 5.

12. Thiaucourt, C. (1889), 67; Jamsen, A.M. (1949), 192; Paratore, E. (1951), 608ff, 705.

13. Minucius Felix Octavius, 33, 4.

14. c.f. Ann. II, 85; V,4.

15. Weber, W.G. (1921), 91ff.

16. Weber later suggests (148) that Tacitus only knew these commentarii through Pliny the Elder; this can surely not be the case.

17. Syme, R. (1958), 310.

18. Paratore, E. (1951), 529.

19. Paratore, E. (1951), 295: "Tacito ha considerato i due poli opposti della Germania in ascesa e della Giudea in declino e li ha artisticamente coloriti."

20. c.f. Liebeschuetz, W. (1966), 126-139.

21. On this compare again Germanicus and Tiberius as foils to each other, and possibly also Agricola and Domitian.

22. Compare almost any description of a 'good' military leader in Tacitus (especially Agricola), and any other historian.

23. Lévy, I. (1946), 331-340 makes this suggestion during a consideration of all Tacitus's proposed Jewish origins.

24. Plutarch, de Iside, 31

25. Josephus, con.Apion 1, 14-15.

26. Homer, Iliad VI, 184; Oddyssey V, 282. c.f. Josephus Antiq. Jud. VII, 3,2,67.

27. Lévy, I. (1946), 331-340.

28. c.f. Ann. XV, 44; Suetonius Claudius 25, Nero 16.

29. Hist.IV, 82-84 (Serapis); Hist.II, 2-4 (Venus of Paphos).

30. Pliny, N.H. V, 70-73.

31. Josephus B.J.III, 3.

32. Strabo Geog. 16, 2, 34-36.

33. c.f. also Pliny N.H.XII, 3; Strabo Geog.16, 2, 41.

34. Tacitus may have described Galilee and the rest of Judaea further in the Annals as relevant to the governorship of Pontius Pilare (Syme, R. (1958), 449).

35. Pliny N.H. V, 71-72 (lacum dirum...pestilentibus); Josephus B.J.IV, 9, 4; Strabo Geog. 16, 2, 42-43 (mistaking the name as Lake Sirbonis). Neither Strabo nor Josephus make their descriptions unpleasant.

36. Marchesi, C. (1924), 173.

37. Josephus B.J. V, 4-5.

38. Pliny N.H.V, 72.

39. But compare Strabo Geog.16, 2, 36 and 40 on the site of Jerusalem.

40. 2 Chronicles 32, 30; 2 Kings 18, 17.

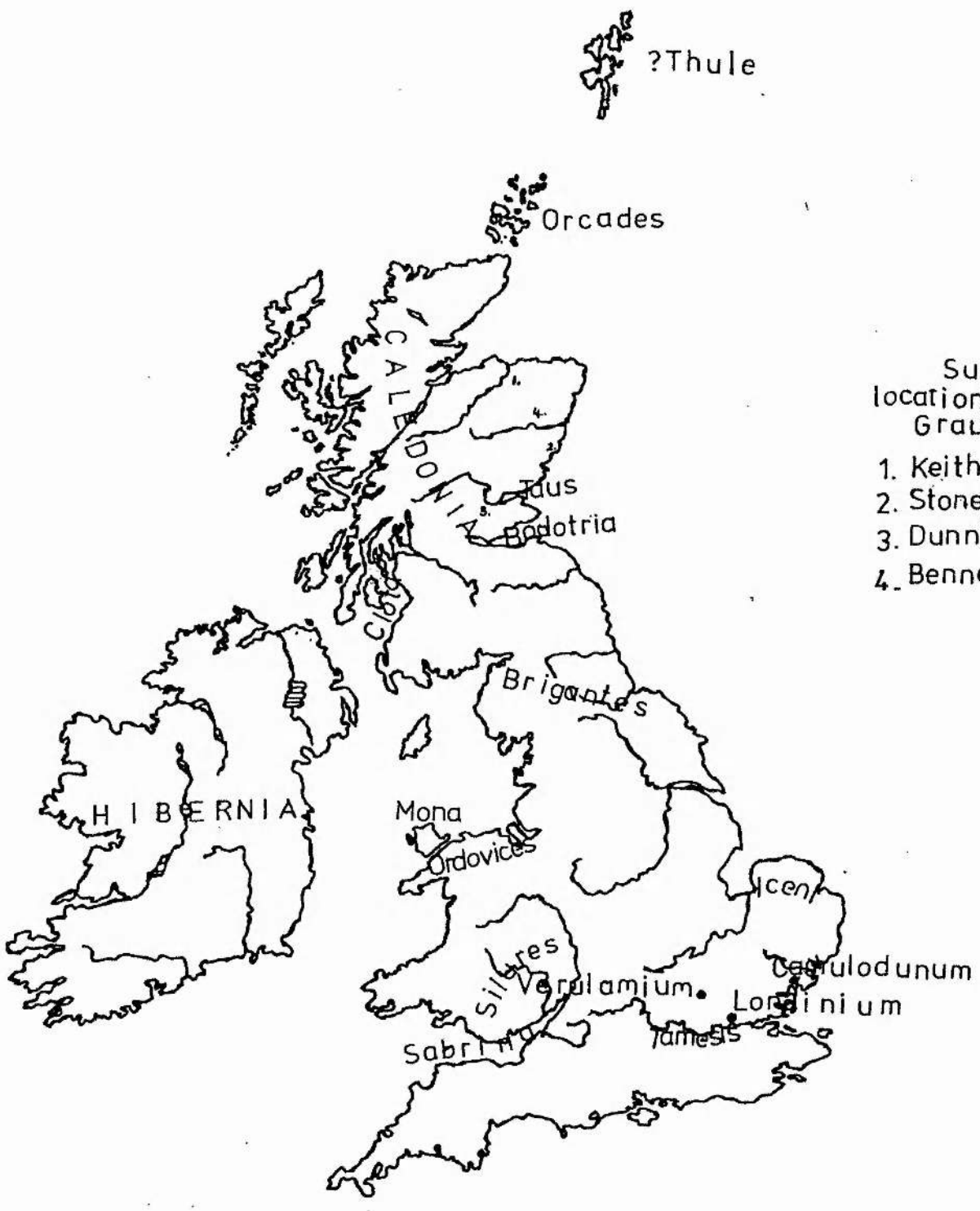
41. The four are mounts Moriah, Sion, Aera and Bezetha. Conflicting views are expressed by Spooner, W.A.(1891); Ramsay, G.G. (1915), and Moore, C.H. (1979), 194 n1.

42. c.f. Daniel 2, 44; Suetonius Vespasian 4.

43. c.f. the reprehensible behaviour of Cerialis at Hist.IV, 77 and V, 22, who is absent at each time of crisis and succeeds only by luck.

44. c.f. Josephus B.J. VII, 4, 2.

45. Paratore, E. (1951), 292.



Suggested locations of Mons Graupius:

1. Keith
2. Stonehaven
3. Dunning
4. Bennachie

1 : 6000,000

Chapter 3

Britain

Lying at the western edge of the Roman Empire, beyond the semi-civilised Gauls and even beyond the Oceanus itself, Britain was nevertheless to play a significant part in Roman history, and therefore too in its recording. From the first encroachment of the Romans under Caesar in 55 and 54 B.C., Britain became increasingly more familiar to the Roman mind, as can be seen by Strabo's account of the island and its inhabitants (1), and after Claudius's invasion in 43 A.D., Roman occupation could not be halted. Caesar's landings had been little more than a token expedition, a warning to those of the Britons who would cross the water to aid their Gallic neighbours against the Romans; they were never intended to reflect a permanent move. However, there is evidence (e.g. from the institution of British coinage based on Mediterranean models and using the Latin language) that from this date onwards Roman influence in terms of trade was growing rapidly.

Claudius's interest was more expansionist, and in the decades which followed England and Wales were overrun and the process of 'civilis ation' (2) begun. By the end of the 70's, Rome had extended to the edge of Caledonia, and Agricola was in charge of operations: almost as important an undertaking as Caesar's first crossing of the Channel. Caesar had written his own record; it was left to Tacitus to complete that of Agricola.

Although Britain had been firmly established in the Roman mind as an island lying off the coast of Gaul, and despite the years of occupation leading up to Agricola's campaigns, Britain was really only known by its southern regions, and by the place names which Tacitus glances over in the Annals:

Londinium, Camulodunum etc. (3). Further north, Britain was an unknown quantity, perhaps a land of rumour and fable like the distant parts of Germany (4). Ireland certainly suffered from an unfounded reputation (5). Tacitus dispels most of this in the Agricola, although it is clear from here and elsewhere that his own view towards the Britons was nonetheless coloured.

Tacitus's portrayal of Britain bears a different emphasis to his presentation of other Roman provinces. Instead of interspersing British events with other occurrences of the same year in the customary annalistic fashion, as with, say, Armenia or Africa, Tacitus restricts his material to three distinct and detailed episodes (6): the first, dated to 97-98 A.D. (7), is the biographical account of Tacitus's father-in-law, Gnaeus Iulius Agricola, a self-contained early work; the second and third both occur parenthetically in the Annals, produced toward the end of Tacitus's career. These are at Annals XII, 31-40, and Annals XIV, 29-39. Each covers a major occurrence in Romano-British history: the war against the Silurian Caratacus, culminating in Roman victory and a public triumph in Rome in 51 A.D.; and a decade later, the revolt of Boudicca and the Iceni, subdued by Suetonius Paulinus. In each of these, Tacitus avoids the annalistic format, and instead treats Britain as a narrative entity (8). The result of this is to cohere the events of the separate years while giving a clear picture of the action. The Agricola, being only concerned with Britain, follows chronological order, turning to the traditional annalistic framework for the central portion of the narrative, which covers the year-by-year campaigns of the army.

As well as these three episodes on Britain, the country is mentioned at other points in Tacitus's work, mainly in the

Histories, and from these brief references we can gather some impression of the attitude held by Tacitus towards the Britons and their land. Perhaps the distinguishing characteristic most frequently found is the remoteness of Britain (9). It is one of the extremities of the Empire:

> multi ad hoc numeri e Germania ac Britannia et Illyrico
>
> (Hist. I, 6)
>
> quidam in Britanniam rapti et remissi a regulis. ut quis ex longinquo revenerat, miracula narrabant, vim turbinum et inauditas volucris, monstra maris, ambiguas hominum et beluarum formas, visa sive ex metu credita (Ann.II, 24)

This remoteness suggests fear through the unknown, and at the same time is mysterious and interesting for this very quality. Tacitus may be playing on this interest by deliberately avoiding much detail in order to retain this mystery over Britain. A second recurrent aspect assigned to Britain is its permanent state of instability and unrest, summed up in the phrase:

> numquam satis quieta Britannia (Hist. II, 97)

which applies equally to the native inhabitants and to the Roman garrisons. Britain is a constant source of trouble, particularly during the years of civil war covered by the Histories, and though this unsettled condition brought glory to the Roman army through its victories (10), it also tended to affect the soldiers and auxiliaries serving under such a condition, and to infl ict upon them a reputation for fickleness and untrustworthiness, easily persuaded of the merits of changing their allegiance:

> scriptas in Britanniam ad quartadecimanos...quod utraque legio pro Othone, adversa Vitellio fuerat
>
> (Hist.II, 86) (11).

this may be a result of distance and insularity. Nevertheless, even allowing for some rhetorical exaggeration of this characteristic unreliability, the thought is still very strongly brought out either through odd references or in the larger-scale passages on Britain. The quarrelsome Britons are, then, a foe to be reckoned with, and carefully watched, as far as is possible in such a remote island. This attitude towards Britain may have been current amongst Tacitus's contemporaries, some of whom may even have served in the province under Agricola or other of the Roman governors of the period.

Although Tacitus has often been attacked for his geographical vagueness, there is in fact a large amount of incidental detail showing through the narratives on Britain, proving that he must have had access to some reasonably full and accurate source of information, and that the omissions are deliberate rather than due to ignorance. Names would on the whole be meaningless to his readers, and it is the atmosphere of the land which interests Tacitus and which he wished to put across; his work is intended as history, not as a geographical treatise, so that a scene can be described while not located.

This is the case in the culminating events of both the passages in the Annals. The first (Ann.XII, 31-40) covers the years 47-57 A.D., the governorships of Ostorius and Didius Gallus, by a process of 'telescoping' (12) onto the activities of Caratacus (sections 32-39), and the decisive battle localised only by: transfert bellum in Ordovices (sect. 33). However, by brief remarks on the topography (montibus arduis; obiectus amnis; imminentia iuga), an image of the site is built up, adding to the drama without interrupting the action and the rapid narrative. The outlying sections cover events in still

less detail, localising by means of tribal names (in itself only a rough guide to an area and of little help unless the name is already familiar), and of the occasional major geographical site such as Hibernia, Camulodunum (well known to the reader for its connection with Claudius, whose temple was established there), and the uncertain reading of section 31: Avonam inter et Sabrinam fluvios. But in general, Tacitus is giving us glimpses of the character of the land, part of which is credible, and part of which consists almost of clichés: (per saltus per paludes).

In the second British episode in the Annals, (XIV, 29-39), we are made to concentrate on the events related to the revolt of the Iceni, again culminating in a decisive battle. Here however the scene moves from a poetic description of Mona and the Druids in section 30 to the sack of Camulodunum in 31 and the ensuing battle there, to Suetonius in London in 33 and the final onslaught in an unspecified location in 34ff., again described topographically (artis faucibus et a tergo silva clausum; apertam planitiem esse sine metu insidiarum; angustias loci). No more than this is necessary to understand the events portrayed, nor would a place name usefully serve much purpose other than to satisfy modern curiosity and desire for exactitude.

In the case of the earlier work, the Agricola, Tacitus gives the conventional description of the island (see chapters 7 and 8), but as with the passages from the Annals there is also much material of a topographical nature to be found added incidentally to the narrative sections, which is here as valuable as, if not more valuable than the conventional aspects described in sections 10-17 and 24.

The structure of the Agricola is carefully thought out

so that the construction plays an important part in the deliberate emphasis of certain points. The context of each section is, predictably, as vital as the content. The overall plan of the work is as follows:

1-3 Introduction, apology

4-9 Agricola's birth, early history, subordinate positions in the Roman army, military service in Britain.

10-13 Geography and ethnography of the island (relative position, shape, origines, mores, climate and agriculture).

13-17 Brief history of Roman involvement with Britain.

18-19 The beginning of Agricola's governorship; Southern Britain and Mona.

20-27 Annalistic coverage of the first six years of campaigning, including 24 on Ireland.

28 Mutiny of the Usipi.

29-38 The final campaigh (84 A.D.), speeches of Calgacus and Agricola, the battle at Mons Graupius, Roman victory.

39-46 Domitian's reaction, Agricola's recall and obscure end in Rome; philosophical conclusion.

The integration and role of the geographical sections is to be considered at a later point. The elements contained in these sections are identical to these found in Tacitus's descriptions of Germany, Judaea, Byzantium and Capri, although weighted differently in each case to reflect the particular characteristics of the land in question. Here the description of each aspect is kept to a minimum for the requirements of the text, so as not to unbalance the biography as a whole.

Tacitus tells us (13) that he knew of the accounts of Britain by Livy and Fabius Rusticus, butnother than this we

can say with no certainty which sources contributed to his knowledge of Britain. The island was known to the Greek geographers from at least the fourth century B.C. (14), though their interest tended to concentrate more upon the Eastern Mediterranean. It was not until Roman times that Britain began to figure more in historical and geographical accounts, for Roman interest was far more concerned with the western regions of Europe, due to their closer proximity. Historical events such as the Carthaginian Wars focused attention onto Spain and Gaul, and contact with Britain was an inevitable conclusion to this process. In the century preceding the work of Tacitus a large number of records became available, some of which are still extant, such as the accounts of Caesar (50's B.C.), Strabo (end of 1st Century B.C.), Pomponius Mela (c.40 A.D.) and Pliny the Elder (70's A.D.); alongside these we may consider the role played by the poets, whose references to Britain, although prone to romantic imagery and exaggeration, give some indication of the picture and the awareness of the island held at a particular period by Roman popular opinion.

Other records, though their existence is known, are now lost, such as the histories of Livy and Fabius Rusticus; some can only be conjectured, as with the possibility of personal military records by governors such as Suetonius, or with the large body of forgotten works, now lost and unrecorded, but which may have been available to Tacitus. Perhaps most important, whilst most difficult to judge in extent, is the availability of oral accounts by eye-witnesses, ranging from Agricola himself and his scouts, to native auxiliaries and merchants. All these could have provided source material for Tacitus as he undertook to describe Britain.

Julius Caesar covers the geography and ethnography of Britain in the de Bello Gallico (15), some hundred and fifty years before Tacitus was writing (see chapter 8). He does not follow the more usual practice of prefacing his military accounts of Britain (at B.G.IV, 20-38; V, 2-23) by a general introduction to the area of warfare and the enemy. Instead he explains the necessity of geographical knowledge:

> itaque vocatis ad se undique mercatoribus neque quanta esset insulae magnitudo, neque quae aut quantae nationes incolerent, neque quem usum belli haberent aut quibus institutis uterentur, neque qui essent ad maiorum navium multitudinem idonei portus, reperire poterat.
>
> (IV, 20)

and immediately begins his narrative, which includes little topographical detail. He delays his description of the ethnography and geography until V, 12-14, prior to the major engagement against Cassivellaunus. Apart from the south-east of the island, any detail would be irrelevant to the historical context, and indeed this was probably the extent of Roman knowledge then. However, a concise survey of the country as a whole, as in section 13, is useful to a reader whose acquaintance with Britain is severely limited. He described the triangular shape of the island (triquetra) its approximate size and its relation to Ireland. other islands and to the European continent. Many of Caesar's facts are correct, except for the common and striking misapprehension about the relation between Britain and Spain, an error handed down from an earlier mistake of latitude (16), amd continued in Tacitus.

It would be highly surprising if Tacitus did not know Caesar's work, and use it as a source, but we have no direct

evidence in support of this unless we accept Couissin's negative theory (17) that Tacitus is deliberately omitting any reference to the earlier historian, while at the same time provoking echoes of his work, to Caesar's detriment. Tacitus is commonly reticent about his sources, so that the omission of Caesar's name need not in itself be significant.

Catullus, about the time of Caesar's invasions, writes of the horribilesque ultimosque Britannos (XI, 11), which are a source of military adventure rejected by the lover Septimius (XLV, 22).

Strabo (c.64 B.C.-c.21 A.D.) in his geography gives an account of Britain (IV, 5, 1-5) which is broadly similar to Caesar's description, but fuller, intermingling geographical and historical material with ethnographical sections, apparently influenced by Pytheas and Caesar. His facts are not so clearly stated as Caesar's, and there are obvious misconceptions about Ireland (ἡ Ἰέρνη at IV, 5, 4). Strabo follows this with an account of Thule, the most northerly land known to the ancient geographers. His aim is to summarise geographical knowledge and to correct the errors of his predecessors, as with Pytheas and Thule; he makes little attempt to distinguish separate areas within the island. It is possible that Tacitus may have drawn upon this account for basic facts, but like Caesar, Strabo has a restricted awareness of any regions beyond those closest to the Channel crossing points. It is interesting to note here, though, the presence of Britons in Rome.

After Caesar's invasions, Britain began to appear more frequently in Roman poetry. Horace remarks upon Britain as a potential theatre of war and glory:

principe Caesare in
Persas atque Britannos
vestra motus aget prece. (Carm. I, XXI, 14-16)

and on its position at the furthest point of the Empire, a typically hyperbolic portrayal:

servos iturum Caesarem in ultimos
orbis Britannos (Carm. I, XXXV, 29-30)

The natives are uncivilised:

visam Britannos hospitibus feros (Carm. III, IV, 53)

and a foe to take seriously:

intactus aut Britannus ut descenderet
Sacra catenatus via (Epod. VII, 7-8)

Propertius, still using rhetorical imagery, uses the ethnographical detail now archaeologically proved correct (18), that the Britons fought with chariots:

pictoque Britannia curru (Eleg. IV, III, 9)

Ovid continues the exaggeration in:

sed Scythiam Ciliciaeque feros virides Britannos (Am. II,

So even in poetry we find some advance in knowledge.

Pomponius Mela's de Chorographia, composed c.40 A.D. during the reign of Caligula, or early in Claudius's reign, follows the same aim as Strabo's work: purely geographical description. His account is concise and direct, and although the exact dating of the three books is uncertain, it may have been written after Claudius's British expedition of 43 A.D., and hence had the added advantage of fresh knowledge (19). Mela thus marks the point at which Rome truly began to spread her influence through Britain, with a resultant increase in understanding of the island. Many of the facts are similar to those given by Caesar and Strabo (the triangular shape, the position, chariots), but it is clear that Mela has made considerable advances on either author. He knows far more about the northern reaches of Britain: the Orcades, the Haemodae, and the phenomenon of

short summer nights, familiar to us from Tacitus's account. It is likely that Tacitus may have preferred to follow more recent descriptions of the island to that of Caesar, since the material is fresher and more accurate.

Turning to a geographer of the next generation, we know that the Elder Pliny was used as a source by Tacitus in his accounts of warfare in Germany (20), and it is strongly conjectured that his other works besides the Bella Germanorum were major contributions to Tacitus's information, both historical and geographical. It is probable that the two men were acquainted (21). The Natural Histories, in the geographical books, contains a brief report on Britain (IV, xvi, 102-104), which omits any ethnographical material. Like Mela, he includes facts newly discovered, and fresh names, products of thirty years' occupation since the compilation of Mela's work. The themes of Thule and short nights are reiterated. For the first time in an extant Latin work the name Caledonia is found, leading forward again to Tacitus's report of the Scottish campaigns of Agricola.

Shortly after the time of Pliny, contemporary with Tacitus himself, Juvenal shows an increasing precision in his references to Britain, proving the more widespread awareness generally sensed amongst his peers, Tacitus's audience. On the basis of the numerous references to Britain in the Satires, it has been conjectured that Juvenal may have lived in the island, perhaps serving under Agricola, and the following lines may support this, though it is also possible that they represent a farrago of the best known facts on Britain:

> illic heu miseri traducimur, arma quidem ultra
> litora Iuvernae promovimus et modo captas
> Orcades ac minima contentos nocte Britannos
> (II, 159-161)

At the same time, Juvenal uses the same traditional images as

the earlier poets: the distance from Rome to the extreme of Thule:

> Gallia causidicos docuit facunda Britannos
> de conducendo loquitur iam rhetore Thyle (XV, 111-112)

and of the wild unruly inhabitants:

> quo nec terribiles Cimbri nec Brittones umquam
> ...hac saevit rabie inbelle (XV, 124, 126)

It is interesting that Juvenal refers to Britain on six separate occasions in the Satires, suggesting perhaps that Britain was a frequent topic of conversation, probably in an equal mixture of fact, exaggeration and romance.

By the time of Tacitus's writing, then, although popular knowledge had probably developed little over the past century or so, educated Roman knowledge of the island had increased enormously, as can be seen from this progression from the time of Caesar to that of Pliny and Juvenal.

Returning to that group of authors whose works are no longer extant, we can be certain that two at least were used by Tacitus. Livy would have described Caesar's expeditions in chronological order in Book 105 of his History, after his account of the Gallic campaigns, and would presumably have added a section upon British geography, to parallel that on Germany in Book 104. It may be from this that Tacitus is quoting in Agricola 10. Fabius Rusticus wrote his history in c.70 A.D., spanning the Neronian years. We know that Tacitus also used this work in his account of the same period in the Annals (22), and its content would certainly have been more up to date than that of Livy's account. However, it cannot be judged to what extent Tacitus used either author, though it is noteworthy that being customarily so silent about his sources, Tacitus should have named these authorities here.

A quite different source of information on the entire known world was the map of Agrippa (23), set up in the Porticus Octaviae in Rome at the end of the first century B.C., a pictorial method of developing some awareness of the relation between the diverse sections of the Roman world. There may have been other maps available for the military use of commanders such as Agricola, but these would consist more of place names and distances, with little or no topographical clarity, perhaps in the manner of the Notitia Dignitatum of the fourth century A.D.

It has already been mentioned that Tacitus may have had access to the commentarii or memoirs of governors of Britain, or indeed to official reports sent in by these commanders. Suetonius Paullinus composed memoirs of his service in Mauretania (24) in 41 A.D. and it has been argued that he may have also done this in the case of Britain (25). There is no suggestion that any other British governor wrote memoirs, and though Paulinus was a literary man, his interests lay elsewhere than in geography.

Finally, and most important, we reach the question of oral sources. The most obvious candidate here is Agricola himself, the ideal source for all the information Tacitus needed to compose this biography. Although he died in 93 A.D. before the established date of composition, it is inconceivable that a historically minded man like Tacitus would not have questioned his father-in-law about a subject in which he had played so central a role. Even if most of their conversation centred on the action, topographical details often play a large part in the course of events, and, described by a participant, would be reliable, logical, accurate and memorable where invaluable to the narration.

As well as this personal and specialised source, there were also other sources for which Agricola may have been intermediary: the reports of scouting parties sent out by Agricola and other commanders (26), particularly those covering northern Britain; local guides who supported the Romanisation of their land (27), and also the activities of the fleet, an important arm of Agricola's force (28) which was later sent out to complete the circumnavigation of the island. These groups would have helped in the piecing together of knowledge of the geography and the terrain ahead, and would have reported back to Agricola to enable him to plan his military strategy. Agricola had spent all his years of military service in Britain (29), so that it was on a sound footing of geographical knowledge of England and Wales that he set forth into the unknown regions of the north.

Tacitus was compiling his biography within little more than a decade from the date of the campaigns and there would be men in Rome who had served under Agricola, or in Britain after 84 A.D. Additionally, there were the native Britons on whom Strabo remarked, and merchants who travelled the length of the Empire. We are told that the latter is one method used by Agricola to gain information on Ireland (30). However, it is unlikely that Tacitus would have needed to look further than a few written sources backed up by the essential details passed on within his own family circle. Thus Caesar, Strabo, Livy, Fabius Rusticus would have been used selectively for the general description of the island, but for the details interspersed through the text, and for the less generally known facts, Agricola himself must surely have been Tacitus's major authority. There is no suggestion that he himself ever visited Britain, nor is the

approach which he adopts particularly sympathetic to Britain, as in the case of Germany. This means that all his information on the land came from external sources.

Britain must, at the time of publication of the Agricola, have been still to some extent a shadowy, relatively unknown place to most edusated Romans. Some vague recollections of past reading of Caesar and others might be stirred by the mention of tribal names or the odd place in southern Britain, but this is the most that Tacitus could have expected, and thus justifies his own description of Britain in the Agricola as a starting point, a basis on which to buildnthe events of his narrative.

The main purpose of the Agricola is biographical: to show the commander in a good light and extol his virtues. Thus the geographical content is carefully slanted to reflect upon his personality, a practice paralelled in other sections of Tacitus's work (31). The Agricola is more obviously biased than other such examples, since the addressee is so closely related to the author. "Everything, or nearly everything, serves in one way or another to set in relief the hero's character and achievements" (32), and this includes the geography of Britain. Britain is Agricola's "theatre of virtus" (33) and as such is central to his biography. The sections describing British geography (10-13) apply to the whole work by providing a context in which Agricola can be seen and be judged (favourably, of course). Agricola is a sympathetic character, easy to relate to (34) and in the same way he relates to the land and people in whose company he finds himself. This theme is found throughout the Agricola. We may compare here Tacitus's portrayal of Germanicus

in Germany (Annals I and II), set against a hostile landscape. However, Germanicus is a military figure primarily, whereas Agricola is seen far more from the personal angle, his personality overlying his strategic ability, though the latter too is important (35).

It is perhaps strange that the British landscape and its natives are not portrayed as savage and dangerous: Scottish and Welsh scenery can be oppressive, as can the climate, and yet Tacitus does not describe them thus (36). Nor is the reverse impression left of a pretty 'romantic' country and race. Instead we receive a realistic and comprehensible view, so that Agricola, his opponents and his context are tangible and credible. Agricola is not a 'super-hero' who inevitably succeeds against all odds, but is an approachable and human figure who does his job well. This does not weaken him, but rather brings him respect on the strength of his personality and attitude.

Britain's importance to Tacitus lies only in the fact that Agricola reached the peak of his career in theisland. One would expect Tacitus to be biased, to resort to rhetorical exaggeration to further his eulogistic aim, but there is no such practice in his treatment of geography. Tacitus is remarkably accurate in his descriptions: he does not talk of huge mountains or insuperable rivers, but gives a realistic picture. Yet there are points at which he has been tempted to exaggerate Agricola's achievements, most obviously in the speeches of Calgacus and Agricola before the battle at Mons Graupius (sections 30-34). As far as Tacitus is concerned, Agricola is completing the conquest of the entire island, and this justifies the initial account of all Britain: what Tacitus has described is the area over which Agricola will ultimately gain control-including Thule (sections 10 and 38):

Britanniae situm populosque...referam...quia tum primum perdomita est (Agr. 10)

For similar eulogistic reasons, Tacitus stresses the increased knowledge of Britain brought through Agricola's campaigns by his early promise of new and reliable information (rerum fide Agr. 10) (37). The presentation of fresh facts, leaving aside any didactic purpose, is a method of eulogising Agricola and of minimising the achievements of his predecessors and successors.

By stressing Agricola's achievements in both military and geographical fields, Tacitus is implicitly making a further point, this time political. In his view, Agricola had been too successful to satisfy Domitian. It is hard to say how true this accusation was, but the inference is strongly made here that Domitian resented Agricola's success and popularity. Certainly the picture of life in Britain is of a freer and less oppressive society than that of Domitian's Rome (38). Tacitus may have intended the Agricola as an apology for his own political subservience so much in contrast to the political scene in Britain (39).

So the purpose of geography in the Agricola, apart from the obvious need for the elucidation of events, is eulogistic and political; at the same time it provides variety by the different literary approach, and is also structurally significant. It breaks up the military narrative without distracting too much attention, and stimulates the reader's imagination by encouraging a picture of the scene in which the succeeding events take place, and an awareness of the character of the land.

The literary device of contrast is not so marked in

the Agricola as in Tacitus's later works, though it is present nevertheless. There is political and moral comparison between Agricola and Domitian, as we have seen. Agricola is also set against his British counterpart Calgacus. Both are fighting for their ideals, are respected leaders with much popular support; each is a worthy opponent for the other. Though Agricola has all our support, Calgacus arouses sympathy for his position. Both men are representative of Britain: Calgacus in the sense that he is intrinsically a part of the land by his birth, upbringing and character, and Agricola in that his career is so totally bound up with Britain, and in Roman eyes (or at least in Tacitus's) he and Britain are almost one; his name will always bear this association (Britanniam ei provinciam dari... quia par videbatur Agr. 9). Agricola's campaigns are implicitly compared to these of his predecessors, and his achievements weighed favourably against theirs (40). So too the fiercely resisting Caledonians are distinguished from the Roamising Britons (41) as they make their final heroic stand against the invader.

Britain is seen in relation to Rome, by a comparison of both place and people. The crowded centre of Rome is vastly different from the wild emptiness of Scotland, and the uncultured Britons are stronger, hardier and more deserving of respect than the so-called civilised Romans as represented by Domitian, who are attempting to corrupt the Britons with the profligate luxuries whose only effect is to weaken those who accept (42). Rome is only equal to Britain in the shape of an Agricola, or in militaryprowess, and perhaps Tacitus feels slight envy for the Britons in this.

Britain is openly compared with Ireland in section 24, with the conclusion that the two islands are very similar,

though Tacitus vastly underestimates the strength and resistance of the Irish race.

By the opposition of ideas shown through contrast, a stronger picture is given ofnthe opposites: Agricola, the Britons, the land of Britain, which deliberately encourages the reader to think along particular lines as followed by Tacitus.

From Sallust comes the structural use of geographical material found in Tacitus's early works (43). There are in the Agricola three sections which are markedly different from the surrounding material, though still integrated into the context: sections 10-13, 24 and 28. These mark "les étapes importantes d'un développement dont Tacite n'a pas voulu rompre le rythme allègre" (44). The first, the geography of Britain, is set after the report of the actions of earlier governors whilst Agricola gains his military experience, at the time at which Agricola took over the governorship. Our anticipation is aroused, but we are left in suspense (45). So too with the account of Ireland which breaks the continuous narrative of the campaigns as it is reaching the climax. Scotland is not yet subdued, yet a confident Agricola is already looking at Ireland with a view to its conquest. The battle is once more delayed by section 28, an anecdote of the mutinous Usipi, so that when the narrative of the battle is eventually begun, it has been built up and emphasised by the suspense. It is indeed important enough to occupy a large proportion of the biography, being the culmination of Agricola's governorship and a decisive victory over the Caledonian tribes. Thus these non-military episodes mark off the climaxes of Agricola's career (43), emphasising the drama of the main narrative, as well as being relevant in their own right.

On the whole, the contents of sections 10-13 follow the conventional pattern of geography, origins, climate and so on, but within this framework Tacitus makes some statements which merit further comment. The geographical sections concentrate mainly upon the north of the country, the location of most of the events he is to describe. His predecessors considered Britain as a three-sided island, as we have seen; now Tacitus is stating the existence of a fourth side. This is stressed by his quoting of Livy and Fabius's suggestions of the general shape of the island. Caesar, Strabo and Mela had not progressed beyond the idea of the triangle (△) (46), Livy saw Britain as an elongated rather rounded shape (though there has been much discussion of the actual object to which Livy is quoted as comparing the island, the basic shape is not greatly questioned (⬯) (47). Fabius Rusticus advanced still further towards a reliable shape by describing Britain as similar to a bipennis or figure with 'two wings' (⧖). Tacitus agrees that this is a good simile only up to the point of the Forth-Clyde isthmus (48), for now that Agricola has crossed this geographical marker, the previously unknown nature of Scotland has been opened up to Roman knowledge: Caledonia takes the shape of a cuneus or wedge (⧗). Only through Agricola has this fact come to light, just as the insular properties of Britain have emerged through his orders to the fleet:

> hanc oram novissimi maris tunc primum Romana classis circumvecta insulam esse Britanniam adfirmavit

So even the name Caledonia is a fairly recent addition to Roman awareness of the island: it occurs in Pliny, but not in Caesar, Strabo or Mela. Tacitus is attempting to stress what a difference Agricola's campaigns have made in a factual geographical

sense as well as through military success and extention. The implication is given that knowledge of the Orcades or Orkneys was also a product of Agricola's campaigns (incognitas), though this is not true: both Mela and Pliny refer to the islands, and in much more detail (49).

The contrast of Britons and Gauls in section 11 is perhaps intended to remind us of the type of Gauls who were the opponents of Caesar, comparable to the Britons facing Agricola. Though the Britons are now strong and warlike, once Agricola has subdued them they will become as weak as their Gallic counterparts have become. But they are still a fierce people, preparing to fight to retain their land and liberty, as Tacitus makes clear by going on to discuss their military habits and prowess. We must be able to respect the Britons for their fighting ability, without admiring them as a race.

Although Tacitus's literary skill has not yet reached the point where almost every word bears further evocative implications beyond the primary meaning, we do find in this description a number of phrases which use the language to project a particular image. An example of this is the phrase used to describe the northern coastline of Britain:

> septentrionalia eius, nullis contra terris, vasto atque aperto mari pulsantur

which appeals to the imagination. It faces a seemingly endless and unbroken sea stretching to infinity, unlike the remaining sides which are precisely located in relation to known lands. The frequentative verb pulsantur is striking and violent, implying a force which cannot effectively be opposed. The account of the north of Britain is weel described, giving a good impression of what Northern Scotland is like, as for example in

the phrase:

transgressis inmensum et enorme spatium procurrentium

where the long heavy syllables hold back the progression of the sentence, thus portraying in verbal form the large extent of empty terrain lying to the north of the Forth-Clyde line, culminating in the familiar notion of the poets of Britain at the end of the known world (extremo iam litore terrarum). Like the accounts of the Orkneys and the long northern nights this is rather exaggerated in order to serve his purpose, but is indeed built on fact, just as in the account of the mare pigrum et grave is a locally known phenomenon in the seas to the north of Britain (50), realistically described in its effect here, even if the explanation is not so credible. The phrase is made deliberately heavy by its hard consonants, vividly portraying the difficulties of sailing in such waters. So too the description of the sea lochs on the west coast is imaginatively yet realistically recounted:

> mare...nec litore adcrescere aut resorberi, sed influere penitus atque ambire, et iugis etiam ac montibus inseri velut in suo

though this is a feature which Tacitus could have come across only in Scotland. The poetic nature of the word resorberi (51) graphically describes the effect of these lochs with the incoming tide. Though the language is far from technical, the phenomenon could hardly be better described, so that even the least geographically minded reader could perceive the effect. Such details are interesting and informative, as well as building up an image of Northern Britain onto which Agricola can be projected. We need to know the character of Britain and the British to understand what Agricola has to face, and we must disting-

uish Caledonia and its inhabitants from the rest of the land, as Tacitus does here, since that is important to the recounting of events in Scotland at the culmination of Agricola's career.

Through the rest of the Agricola Tacitus adds further details on the terrain, particularly that around the battle site of Mons Graupius. The location is still a matter of contention (52), but this is immaterial to Tacitus. He gives all the topographical detail necessary for the reader to understand the site and the battle, mainly in the preceding speeches of Calgacus and Agricola. The dramatic context is affected by the terrain, which also serves some rhetorical purpose in both speeches:

> nunc terminus Britanniae patet....nulla iam ultra gens, nihil nisi fluctus ac saxa (Agr. 30) (Calgacus)
>
> cum vos paludes montesve et flumina fatigarent... (Agr. 33) (Agricola)

So an impressionistic picture of the British, and particularly, the Scottish scenery emerges piece by piece throughout the narrative. This process is the same as that employed by Tacitus with relation to Germany in the Histories and Annals, which might almost be called jigsaw-like, as the separate and interspersed elements cohere to form a broad and realistic image of the land which, to Tacitus, is ingrained in the personality and actions of Agricola. At the same time, the individual character of the land stands out clearly, different from any other place in the Roman world, and fulfilling Woltmann's claim (53) that it is "die Kunst des Geschichtsschreibers, Geographie so zur lehren, das die Länder wie mit einer Persönlichkeit vor uns stehen".

Notes to Chapter 3

1. Strabo Geog. IV, 5, 1-5.
2. c.f. Tacitus Agricola 21:
   idque apud imperitos humanitas vocabatur, cum pars servitutis esset.
3. Annals XIV, 31 (Camulodunum); XIV, 33 (Londinium).
4. Germania 45-46.
5. c.f. Strabo IV, 5, 4 (cannibalism and immorality)
6. It is also probable that Britain was treated elsewhere by Tacitus, in the lost portions of the Annals for example, at the point where Claudius's invasion would have been recorded. This would presumably have received the same type of treatment as the passages in the Annals. Also, the phrase perdomita Britannia et statim omissa (Hist.I,2) suggests that Agricola's campaigns and successive events in Britain were covered under the account of Domitian's reign in the Histories.
7. Ogilvie, R.M. and Richmond, I.A. (1967), 10-11.
8. c.f. Annals XII, 40:
   haec, quamquam a duobus pro praetoribus pluris per annos gesta, coniunxi ne divisa haud perinde ad memoriam sui valerent: ad temporum ordinem redeo.
9. Britanniam freto dirimi (Hist. III, 2)
10. et praecipui fama quartadecumani, rebellione Britanniae compressa (Hist. II, 11)
    domitores Britanniae quartadecumanos appellans (Hist. V,16)
    recentique adversus Britanniam militia (Ann. XI, 3)
11. c.f. also Hist.III, 44 and 70:
    et Britanniam inditus erga Vespasianum favor (44)
    iam Hispaniis Germaniisque et Britannia desciscentibus (70)

12. Martin, R. (1981), 157.

13. Agricola 10.

14. c.f. Strabo's account of Pytheas of Massilia.

15. I am here considering the geographical sections of Caesar's work as genuinely Caesarian. See chapter 8 note 10 on this point.

16. Bunbury, E.H. (1879), II, 219ff.
c.f. Caesar B.G. V, 13,2; Pliny N.H.4, 102.

17. Couissin, P. (1932), 97-117.

18. Crawford, O.G.S. (1949), 132.

19. Pomponius Mela III, 6, 49:
Britannia qualis sit qualesque progeneret mox certiora et magis explorata dicentur. quippe tamdiu clausam aperit ecce principum maximus.

20. Annals I, 69: tradit C.Plinius, Germanicorum bellorum scripto

21. c.f. chapter 5 on the issue of Pliny and Tacitus.

22. Annals XIII, 20: Fabius Rusticus auctor est scriptos esse...

23. Pliny N.H.3,2,17.

24. Pliny N.H.5,14..

25. Syme, R. (1958), II, 765; Reed, N.J. (1974), 926.

26. Agricola 25: portus classe exploravit
26: iter hostium ab exploratibus edoctus.

27. Agricola 21.

28. Agricola 25 and passim

29. Agricola 5, 7-8.

30. Agricola 24: aditus portusque per commercia et negotiatores cogniti.

31. Compare Germanicus in Germany (Annals I-II) (chapter 5); Cœrialis in Germany in Hist.IV and V, and Tiberius in Capri (Ann.IV, 67) (chapter 1).

32. Anderson, J.G.C. (1938), xxviii.

33. Syme, R. (1958), I, 122.

34. c.f. Agricola 9, 19, 22.

35. Agricola passim, but especially 9, 19-20, 22 (planning of forts), 25 (the fleet), 35 ff.(Battle)

36. Agricola 10-13, 18-38 passim. But c.f. Gorrichon, M. (1974), 200-201.

37. c.f. Dudley, D.R. (1968), 177.

38. Liebeschuetz, W. (1966), 126-139 discusses the theme of libertas. See also n.42 below.

39. Mattingly, H. (1948), 15.

40. Gudeman, A. (1928) section 13 commentary ad loc. For example, Tacitus describes attacks on Anglesey (Mona) at two places: Agr. 18 and Ann.XIV, 29-30. In each case the victory is seen as conclusive. In the Agricola Suetonius receives little credit for his achievements as this would detract from our picture of Agricola; in the Annals, the emphasis is far more strongly placed upon Suetonius.

41. Gorrichon, M. (1974), 199; Hanson, W.S. and Keppie, L.J.F. (1979), 4.

42. Agricola 21:

paulatimque discessum ad delenimenta vitiorum, porticus et balineas et conviviorum elegantiam, idque apud imperitos humanitas vocabatur, cum pars servitutis esset

c.f. also Agr. 11

43. Ogilvie, R.M. and Richmond, I.A. (1967), 25.

44. Gorrichon, M. (1974), 200.

45. Compare here the use of the device of suspense in Hist. V; the outcome of the German revolt is delayed by the description of Judaea (see chapter 2 above).

46. Caesar B.G.V, 13; Strabo IV, 5, 1; Mela, III, 6, 50.

47. There is a well known textual problem in this passage, to which, after much thought, I have decided I have nothing to add. Of the three main manuscripts, two give the reading oblongae scutulae (an impossible diminutive, on grounds of gender), the third oblongae scupulae, and a number of emendations have been suggested. The various conjectures include the following: Lacey, W.K. (1955)- oblongo scutulo (shoulder-blade); Ogilvie/Richmond (1967)- oblongae scapulae (shoulder blade); Gudeman, A. (1916)- scutula (rhombus). See Ogilvie/Richmond's discussion of the problem (1967), 168-170.

The palaeographic similarity betwaen scut- and scap- in Carolingean minuscule explains some of this confusion.

48. The limit of Caledonia. Tacitus was well aware of the feature of the Forth-Clyde isthmus (Agr. 23).

49. Mela Chor.III, 6, 54; Pliny N.H.IV, 16, 103.

50. Burn, A.R. (1949), 94.

51. Virgil, Aen. XI, 627:

nunc rapidus retro atque aestu revoluta resorbero
saxa fugit litusque vado labente relinquit

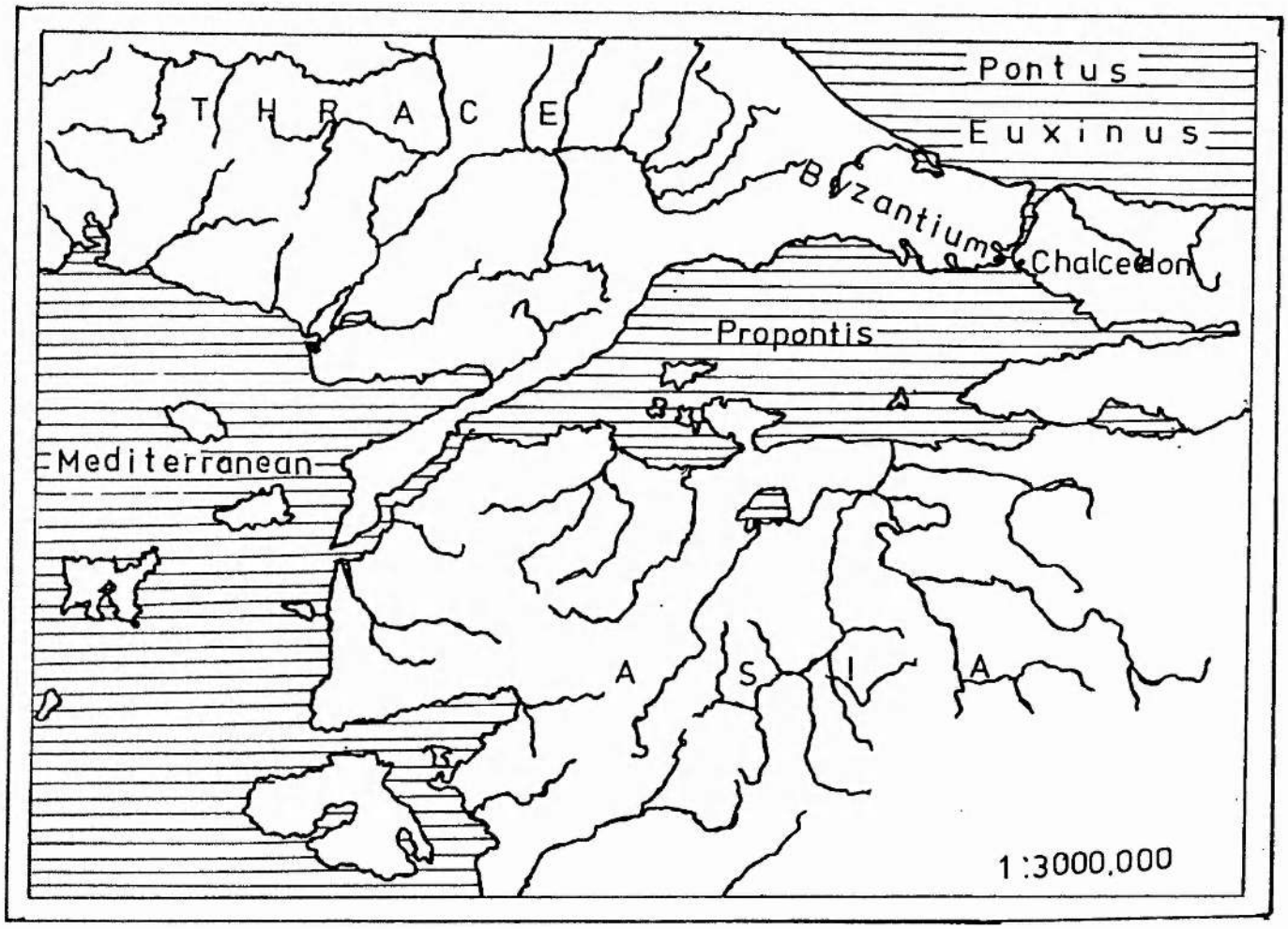
52. Knock Hill, near Keith (Burn, A.R. (1955), 127-133; Henderson-Stewart, D. (1960), 75-88; Wellesley, K. (1967), 266-269)

Raedykes, near Stonehaven (Crawford, O.G.S. (1949), 130-133.

Duncrub, Dunning (Feachem, R. (1970), 120-124)

Durno and Bennachie (St. Joseph, J.K. (1978), 271-287; Hanson/Keppie (1980), 28).

53. Woltmann, K.L.v. Werke von Caius Cornelius Tacitus Berlin, 1811-1817, Bd. VI, s.41 (Quoted in Rademacher, U, (1975), 17.


Pontus
Euxinus
T H R A C E
Byzantium
Chalcedon
Propontis
Mediterranean
A S I A
1:3000.000

Chapter 4

Byzantium

The account which Tacitus gives at Annals XII, 62-63 is, unusually, not intended as a necessary introduction to what follows, nor is it vital to the immediate context, although the role which it plays is interlinked with the remaining events of the consular year (53 A.D.). Indeed, the episode would at first appear to be a spontaneous expansion of one fact: the question of tribute, raised in the Senate during the reign of Claudius.

Apart from this passage, Byzantium figures rarely in the works of Tacitus, once in the Annals (1) as one of the cities visited by Germanicus during his tour of the East, and twice in the Histories (2) with regard to the military situation in the Eastern Mediterranean. Byzantium (Constantinople, Istanbul (εἰς τὴν πόλιν), Stamboul) was a notable city, mainly due to its position on the Bosphorus, for its situation enabled it to block movement effectively to and from the Euxine Sea, as well as providing and guarding the bridging point between Europe and Asia.

A Megarian colony of the seventh century B.C., it must have been prominent in Greek history, particularly for its position as the key to the major corn routes from the Black Sea area, vital to the continued existence of the Greek city states and their colonies, as is shown by the importance of the subject of the corn supply in the Assembly meetings (3). This enforced permanent good relations with the Byzantines through a series of alliances, and as an independent city, Byzantium grew rich. Yet despite the importance of the site,

and perhaps as a result of general knowledge, Byzantium is hardly mentioned by the Greek geographers, excepting Hipparchus (fl. mid second century B.C.), a native of Nicaea, close to Byzantium (4), whose error of latitude was followed by the ancient geographers including Strabo (5), which had the result that their view of the Eastern Mediterranean was correspondingly distorted.

Roman policy towards the city was not dictated by the same motives as that of the Greeks, since the annona came from North Africa (6), not the Euxine, but by the military situation and strategic use of the site, the factors which, added to the city's fame (its prosperity having been lost through constant quarrels with neighbouring areas), led to its rise under the later Roman Empire as the New Rome, the capital of the East, Constantinopolis, in 330 A.D. Byzantium had, from early in Roman history, held a privileged position, starting from the aid extended to Rome in her war against the pseudo-Philip of Macedon in the 180's B.C., which gained the Byzantines the status of a free and confederate city.

The sections describing Byzantium are structured in the following manner:

62. a) Introduction, request in Senate
b) Recent history of the city
c) Geographical description
63. d) Foundation (myth and history)
e) Fishing industry
f) Return to Senatorial situation and request.

Each section provides a link to the next, to form a coherent,

integrated entity, and yet remaining separate from the surrounding material to make a self-contained episode on the theme of Byzantium. Apart from the framework supplied by the Roman Senate, which provides the excuse for this digression, the content bears great similarity to the larger scale descriptive passages, and especially to that on Judaea (7) in its method of structuring the material, following the elements now firmly ingrained in the historiographical tradition (8).

Syme (9) suggests that Tacitus's main sources for the information given in this passage were the Emperor Claudius and the historian Sallust. Since it appears during a description of Claudius's political policies, and since the acta senatus would have recorded Claudius's speeches verbatim, it is certain that Tacitus would have had access to this source of information, and likely that he would have used the material thus available. Syme (10) has gone into this question in some depth, concluding that the material has been taken from the actual speech and turned into a "Sallustian digression" influenced by Tacitus's second source: Sallust's own geographical digression de situ Ponti (11). This is known to us only in fragments, and thus it is not easy to ascertain to what extent Tacitus has made use of its contents. Syme's evidential approach is linguistic (12), based on the use of vocabulary in these sections, and particularly on the phrase

vis piscium immensa Pontum erumpens (Ann.XII, 63)

which appears to echo deliberately the Sallustian fragment

qua tempestate vis piscium Ponto erupit (Sall.Hist.III, 66

This argument is convincing, that Sallust's work may have influenced Tacitus to such a large extent that the later historian

even borrowed phrases, and that the situation into which the geographical material is integrated should be a result of official records. There are other occasions on which Tacitus used written accounts of Claudius's speeches, such as in the matter of Gallic citizenship (13), and it seems highly likely that he would have followed the same methods here.

In addition to the above-mentioned sources, we know of little documentary evidence on the subject of Byzantium. Even the profuse Elder Pliny does no more than mention the city (14). Strabo (15) gives a little more detail, part of which (on the relative sitings of Byzantium and Chalcedon) may be taken from Herodotus (16) or common knowledge. He describes the prosperous fish trade, and the foundation of the city opposite Chalcedon, as does Tacitus, each of these elements being a direct result of the geographical situation. Polybius, on the other hand (17), found it necessary to elaborate his reference to Byzantium in Tacitean fashion, by a lengthy description of the city and Pontus, in preparation for his account of the Rhodian/Byzantine War of 219 B.C. This stresses at frequent points the importance of the site and its advantageous position (εὐκαιρία). Tacitus may have known this account: he is certainly aware of the peculiar benefits of the situation of Byzantium brought out so strongly here by Polybius.

The picture held by Tacitus's contemporaries would be of opulence brought by trade and foreign sources, fed by Eastern attitudes and tastes, an amalgam of the multiplicity of surrounding nations all attracted to this busy port. Byzantium was a necessary place; it could not be ignored, yet at the same time was not highly regarded (18) by the ancient world in general.

The Annals, being politically centred, rarely incorporate non-essential material in the form of digressions, particularly geographical expansions, and thus it would seem important to enquire what reason Tacitus had for extending his subject matter at this point. In the same way as the accounts of Venus of Paphos (19) and the Phoenix legend (20), Byzantium does provide an exotic touch, far removed from the Senate and Rome, linked here by the potentially tedious theme of provincial affairs, and the political context requires some relief and variety. Though the description given could hardly be called stimulating or entertaining, it gives at least a change of scene and of literary presentation. However, this is insufficient reason for digressing. Another suggestion of Syme (21) is that this passage was written about the time when the newly-elected Emperor Hadrian was wintering in or near Byzantium in 117-118 A.D. on his way from Syria to the Danube, and that its intention lies in contemporary political propaganda, thus provoking the passage's "great prominence" (22). This is tenable, but it would not seem to be the most important issue. Although the episode says nothing of relevance to the context, and is of purely general interest, the context is the clue to its significance: the position in relation to the book as a whole. The content is of less importance; the context to which it provides a foil is vital. As in the Capri episode which marks the change to the darker side and the vices of Tiberius, so here Tacitus marks the horrors of the end of Claudius's reign and the rise of Nero to absolute and dangerous power.

Book XII of the Annals, following the death of Messalina and covering the years 49-54 A.D., is carefully constructed to alternate between events in Rome and troubles ahead, as

can be outlined thus:

Sections 1- 9 Claudius marries Agrippina (Nero)

10-21 Claudian foreign policy (Parthia, Bosphorus)

22-27 Agrippina and Nero grow more prominent

27-28 Chatti rise in Germany

29-40 Warfare in Britain (Caratacus)

41-43 Threat of Nero to Britannicus; prodigies

44-51 Armenian and Iberian Wars; Bosphorus

52-55 Evils at Rome

56-65 Domestic disasters; Agrippina and Nero's increasing powers; Claudius's domestic and foreign policies (Byzantium); prodigies; threat to Britannicus

66-69 Climax; murder of Claudius; Nero as Emperor.

This oscillation between domestic and external occurrences prevents too great an emphasis form being placed immediately upon the threat of Agrippina and her son Nero, but at the same time Tacitus is harping on this theme by continually returning to it, with growing insistence: (sections 1-9, 22-27, 41-43, 56-59 and 66-69), with Tacitus hinting at the crimes to come: the murders of Claudius and his son Britannicus, and the events of Nero's reign, including matricide. The troubled provinces, the natural disasters and the prodigies, as often, reflect the happenings in Rome.

The immediate context of the year 53 A.D. occupies sections 58-63. All that Tacitus discusses in this year is the activity of the Senate, and various pleas made for financial aid, but notably, the first speaker is the now mature and newly married Nero pleading for the Trojans. However, the following section turns sharply back to the current ruler (<u>at</u>

Claudius) who predominates in the Senatorial decisions of this year:

saepius audita vox principis (XII, 60)

Nevertheless, despite his autocratic power over the political issues of the day, Claudius has no power over himself nor his own circle: Nero is fast becoming a threat, Agrippina controls his decisions (Agrippinae artibus), freedman are appointed to positions of authority (note the juxtaposition Claudius libertos), and the final irony of this is that the doctor Xenophon, for whose sake Cos has benefitted (sect. 61), conspires with Agrippina to poison Claudius (sect. 67). The whole situation is upside-down, and the Emperor Claudius is prey to even the weakest of his subjects, but even within this context, he assumes a dictatorial position in respect of minor provincial matters, affairs in which he can do no harm.

Section 61 lies parallel to 62-63, in that it is also concerned with the remission of tribute, in this case in Cos. The pedantry of the passage may be due to direct quotation of Claudius, or to Tacitus's attempt to portray Claudius's methods of speech-making. Here, the quality of the place on which attention is focused is that of a school of healing (artem medendi), Claudius leaves no choice to the Senate in making their decision in favour of Cos.

In sections 62-63, the subject changes from Claudius to the Byzantines with a suddenness marked by at, and the proceedings appear to take a democratic shape of direct appeal to the Senate, without the personal intervention of Claudius, in contrast to the preceding issue on Cos. For most of these two sections Rome is forgotten as the emphasis is placed upon Byzantium. It is only at the end of section 63 that Claudius

returns, again in judgemental position (adnitente principe), and his approval seals the bargain:

ita tributa in quinquennium remissa

The topsy-turvy nature of this year is continued in the account of Byzantium, in that Tacitus's description backs up the general picture of a city which is extremely rich and prosperous, and yet the reason for the description is meant to strengthen the appeal of the Byzantines for financial aid from Rome. Ironical as this is, the irony is carried further since even after this account of the city Claudius supports the motion, and the tribute is annulled, a move unquestioned by the Senate.

However, in addition to the retrospective intentions concerning Claudius's reign, and the irony of the present situation, this passage is also serving a prospective aim. The year 53 A.D. creates almost a vacuum before Nero achieves power, and records the weakness of the autocrat Claudius. It is immediately after this account of Byzantium that Claudius meets his death, an event which forms the climax and conclusion of Book XII. The build up has left us in little doubt as to the outcome, but the climax is delayed by the Senatorial proceedings and in particular by this factual and ironic account of an important, well-known city which hardly requires so much attention to be focused on it (23). The description serves to lower the tone and halt the dramatic flow of the narrative, thus placing more emphasis upon the horrors of Claudius's murder, the threat to Britannicus fulfilled in Book XIII, and that implied by the thought of Nero as Emperor, all of which are rapidly presented as if in one breath, after being held back by the description of Byzantium. Thus the important features of sections 62-63 are the lowering of the tone to almost prosaic, the lack of any

atmospheric treatment (24), and the employment of such an episode to delay the following events.

Structurally, too, the geographical contrasts bring further variety, aside from the literary intention of suspending and heightening the events which lie subsequent to this account. Byzantium and its fish trade are far removed from the theme of murder, as is the general mood of each topic, and such a juxtaposition is strikingly inapposite, and therefore far more effective in bringing the exaggeration required by Tacitus here.

It is clear from the preceding section 61 on Cos and its taxation that Claudius expounded at some length upon this subject:

> rettulit dein de immunitate Coiis tribuenda multaque super antiquitate eorum memoravit

Tacitus briefly covers the basic points of Claudius's argument, thus providing an introduction to Byzantium, for the reason for its inclusion is the same, and it can thus be integrated. The causes passed over by Claudius in the case of Cos (military aid to Rome etc.) are of supreme importance to Byzantium's cause for the reason that it is the geographical nature of the place which makes it so strategically vital to Rome, and the account of the former leads to the description of the latter. Like the Greeks, who relied on the corn supply, Rome could ill afford to offend the Byzantines; the location of their city was far too important. Byzantium was something of a special case, with, at times, special privileges above those of other provincial cities, and the status of a free city. It was attached, oddly from a geographical point of view, to the Senatorial province of Bithy-

nia in Asia Minor (25).

The list of aid given to Rome ranges from 180 B.C. up to the time of the request in 53 A.D. As an Eastern port, its role in naval warfare (as with the pirates) is significant. Only its relations with Rome are of relevance here. The factor linking all these events and ensuring communications between Rome and Byzantium is fully stated in concluding section 62:

> quando ea loca insiderent quae transmeantibus terra marique ducibus exercitibusque, simul vehendo commeatu opportuna forent

and stressed in the following sentence too, which juxtaposes the names Europam Asiamque in describing the juxtaposition of the actual continents. The strategic role is given and defined (artissimo...divortio) so that the city's history is inseparably linked to the geographical aspects of the site. In the words extrema Europa (compare Britain) Tacitus brings out the distance and exoticism of the place, and the reference to its foundation by the Greeks recalls its long history and importance. The story of its foundation opposite Chalcedon (sedem caecorum) is found in other writers also (26) and it is clear that Byzantium has many advantages in its situation, as can be seen in the vocabulary used to describe it: (loca opportuna; locorum utilitate; fertili solo; fecundo mari; quaestuosi et opulenti) all very favourable terms, adding to the irony. Both land and sea can support the city, though its defences and revenue (from the fish trade and shipping taxes) come mainly from the sea. Byzantium controls the seas to either side of the Bosphorus, as well as the land passage and ferries to Asia and back. The fish trade of tunny is also quoted by Strabo and Pliny (27), although some of the reasons given for the large supply read rather oddly

to a modern reader (obliquis subter undas saxis exterrita). In fact, it is the system of currents in the Dardanelles which is responsible for this 'fertility'. The harbour at Byzantium, as might be expected in a city so reliant upon the sea, was large, and, it would seem, of importance to the fishing trade as well as to shipping (28).

The references to the Thracian and Bosphoran Wars are much more immediate, as these occurred not long before, and are recorded earlier in the Annals (29). This helps to return us to the contemporary situation, and leaving Byzantium via a glimpse of the Senate in session we are plunged straight away into a recital of portents which abruptly changes the tone to begin the final build up to Claudius's murder.

The vocabulary throughout sections 62-63 is unusual for Tacitus, and there is some Sallustian influence (see note 12) apart from the quotation mentioned above). transmeantibus is from an unusual verb used very infrequently by Tacitus, and it may have been adopted from the Elder Pliny, who uses this word on a number of occasions (30). It suggests 'commute' rather than simply to cross, implying the constant two way movement across and through the Bosphorus. divortio has a geographical sense only as a secondary meaning, similar to the modern English use of the word 'divorce'. The locational meaning is not very common (31), but Tacitus also uses it at Agricola 19. fecundo appears frequently in geographical contexts, recalling the importance of agricultural practices to any such description (32). Amword bearing equal overtones of prosperity is quaestuosi, rather an anachronism by the time of Tacitus (33). The point is reiterated by opulenti, both words conjuring up an image of the city and its wealth, a tangible reflection of the Eastern

riches of fable. The latter word is Sallustian, but not exclusively so (34), and its use was widespread enough to bring the image closer to the reader. The entire passage consists of six long sentences, one of which extends to practically the full length of section 62. The style is generally verbose, employing long and weighty (Claudian?) vocabulary to draw attention to the episode.

The archaic seeming nature of some of the above terms, along with the emphasis placed on them in the context, adds to the effect of distance and to the shock of suddenly shifting from what is verging on the exotic to the pessimistic.

Even if there is much influence of Claudius and Sallust in these two sections, nevertheless Tacitus's use is original because of the context in which he uses the material, and because of the underlying intentions. Despite its brevity, the passage does stand out and serves to throw more weight on Claudius and on subsequent events, and has therefore fulfilled Tacitus's aims, in addition to providing some variety and a structural marker in the Sallustian manner to Book XII as a whole.

Notes to Chapter 4.

1. Tacitus Annals II, 54:
   tum extrema Asia Perinthumque ac Byzantium, Thracias urbes
2. Tacitus Histories II, 83:
   classem e Ponto Byzantium adigi iusserat
   Histories III, 47:
   omnemque militem Mucianus Byzantium adegerat
3. c.f. Aristotle Ath. Pol.43.4
4. Bunbury, E.H. (1879) II, 8-9 and n.8.
   Neugebauer, O. (1975), III, 1313.
5. Strabo Geog. I, 4, 4.
6. c.f. Rickman, G.E. (1971), 298 (App.2).
   Tacitus and the claustra of Egypt: Hist. II, 82; III, 8, 48
7. Tacitus Histories V, 1-13.
8. See Introduction and Chapters 7 and 8.
9. Syme, R. (1958), I, 449.
10. Syme, R. (1958), II, 703-708, App. 40.
11. Sallust Fr. Hist. III, 61-80.
12. Syme, R. (1958), II, 730, App. 53.
13. Tacitus Annals XI, 24.
    See Wellesley, K. (1954), 13-35 and CIL XIII, 1668
14. Pliny N.H.IV, xi, 46:
    in quo oppidum Byzantium liberae conditionis antea Lygos dictum
15. Strabo Geog. VII, 6,2.
16. Herodotus Hist. IV, 144.
17. Polybius Hist. IV, 38, 1-13; 43-44. Polybius knew the city personally.

18. Menander Samea 98ff.

19. Annals III, 62.

20. Annals VI, 28.

21. Syme, R. (1958), I, 243.

22. Syme, R. (1958), I, 396.

23. Compare the equivalent practice in Hist. V, 1-13 and the relation of this passage with events in Germany in Books IV and V (chapter 2 above).

24. Compare Tacitus's treatment of the Dead Sea at Hist. V, 6 as an example of atmospheric description.

25. Pliny Epp. X, 43-44.

26. Strabo Geog. VII, 6, 2; Herodotus Hist. IV, 144.

27. Strabo Geog. VII, 6, 2; Pliny N.H. IX, xx, 51.

28. c.f. Pliny N.H. IX, xx on the 'golden' harbour, so called on account of its wealth.

29. Annals IV, 46-51 (Thrace); XII, 15-21 (Bosphorus).

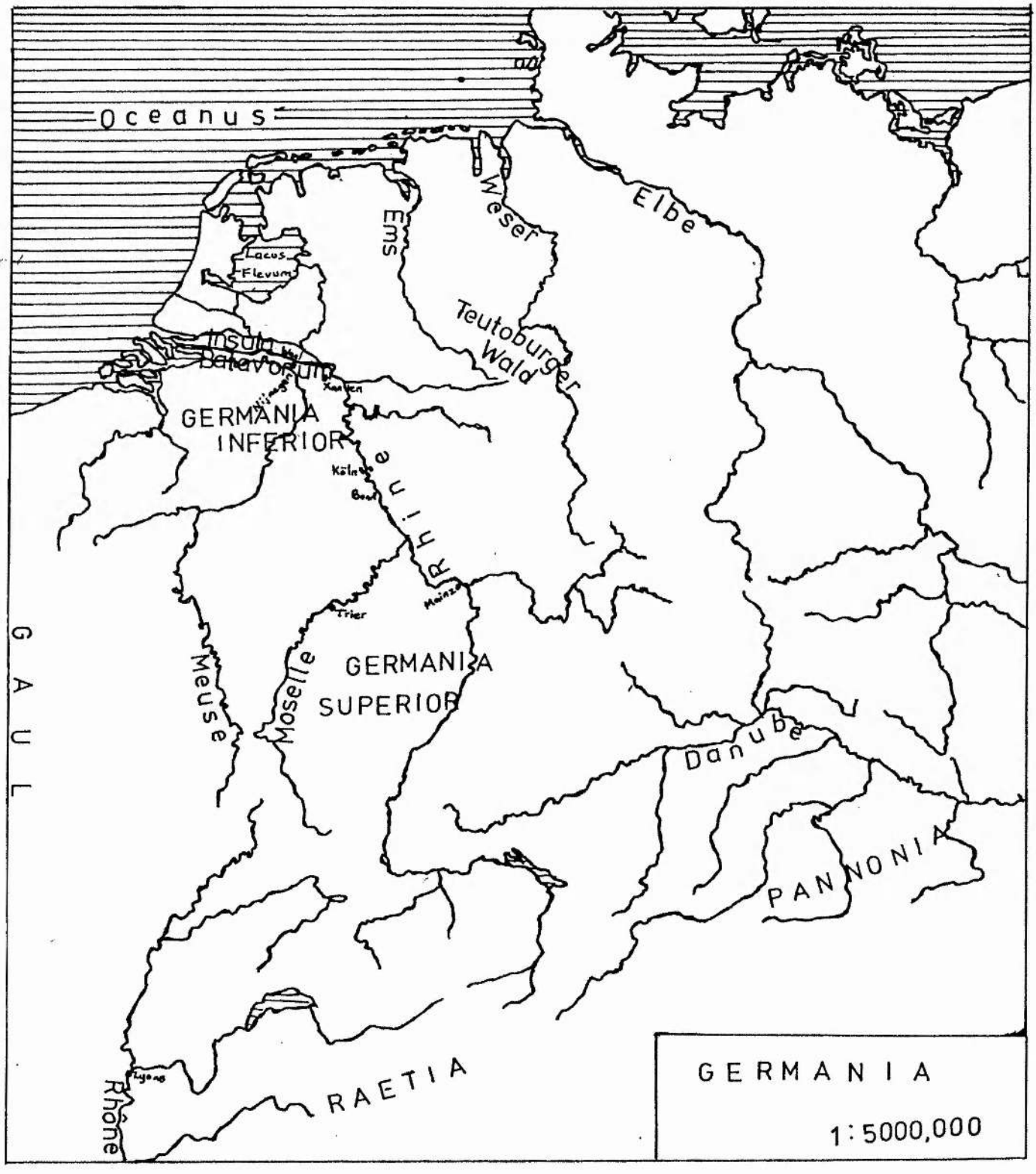
30. c.f. Pliny N.H. X, xxix, 41; XXX, xi, 29; XXXIII, v, 26.

31. c.f. Cicero Att.V, 20, 3; Livy 44, 2, 7; Amm. Marc. 15,4,3. It was considered rather a technical, legal word, also rather archaic.

32. Sallust Jug.17, 5; Virgil Georg. I, 67; Pliny, N.H. XXXIII, iv, 21 etc.

33. Pliny N.H.XXVIII, iv, 13; Livy 39, 15 etc.

34. Sallust Jug. 16, 5; 69, 3; Cicero N.D.3, 33, 81; Virgil Aen. I, 447 etc.


Oceanus
Ems
Weser
Elbe
Lacus
Flevum
Teutoburger
Wald
Insula
Batavorum
Xanten
GERMANIA
INFERIOR
Köln
Bonn
Rhine
Mainz
Trier
Meuse
Moselle
GERMANIA
SUPERIOR
GAUL
Danube
PANNONIA
Lyons
Rhône
RAETIA
GERMANIA
1:5000,000

Chapter 5

Germany

More than any other province or area either within or outside the Roman Empire, Germany stands out in Tacitus's writings as a major centre of events with a preponderence verging on the unbalanced and disproportionate. The existence and length of this so-called 'monograph' de origine et moribus Germanorum bears out this point, for it is no short digression like the description of Britain in the Agricola (1), serving primarily to illuminate the campaigns about to be described and their leader; instead it stands alone. Apart from the obvious fact that the history of the times described by Tacitus, and especially of the year 69-70 A.D., is to a large extent dominated by events in Germany, Tacitus would seem to have had a particular interest in the country: his work the Germania is the sole example known of this genre, composed for its own sake and seemingly not related to a historical work. One must consider what lay behind Tacitus's decision to compose a treatise of this nature, whether it was some personal connection or knowledge, the availability of good sources, political motivation, the historical significance of the country or merely pure interest expanded into a didactic form.

Germany was indeed historically important in the Early Imperial context, and because of this was perhaps more widely known than other outlying nations. Thus Tacitus was appealing to an interest already aroused and partiallt fed, and he stimulates this further by adding topographical and ethnographical details at the frequent points at which Germany figures in his historical work (2). However, the Germania preceded both the Histories and the Annals: it was composed

in 98 A.D., the second consulship of Trajan (3), and shortly after the Agricola at a time when political events were centred on Germany and Trajan's presence there, and it can hardly have been meant solely for general interest, despite the innocuous content.

The Germany of the first century A.D., despite Roman military advances, was not a well known country. It consisted of several tribes of varying size and importance, some whose names were fixed in Roman minds for their earlier activities, such as the Cimbri, and others distant and obscure, such as the Gotones (the Goths). Germany was certainly not a cohesive, united force opposed to the Roman threat or posing its own threat (although the potential is there), and this fact affects Tacitus's treatment, though he is still aware of common denominators linking the individual tribes: both geographical and ethnographical connections, which enable him to compose such a treatise under the one name of Germani. In fact, the name Germania itself was only very recently adopted (4).

The structure of the Germania falls into two main groupings: firstly the traditional geo-ethnographical mélange lasting for 27 sections then 19 sections on the individual tribes or races which Tacitus considers to constitute the Germani, including a short digression (sect. 37) which summarises the historical links between Rome and Germany. Many themes, such as the military aspect, recur almost as leit-motifs, as the threads are bound together by the structure, and each theme leads on to the next. Thus to attempt to tabulate the topics is difficult, but it may roughly be seen as follows:

Sections 1-6 Geography/history/origins; effect of geography on people.

Sections 7-27 : Mores: interlinked themes
7-14 Military/political/religious
14-24 Domestic/economic/social
25-27 Wider social issues

Sections 28-46 : Historical account of tribes by area
28-34 Nearest tribes: Rhineland
35-40 Tribes along the northern coastline (digression in 37)
41-43 Tribes inland, by Danube
44-46 Furthest, most obscure tribes to the north-east.

Tacitus integrates all his material fluently, so that the transition between subjects is at times almost imperceptible, and the work is structurally sound, each aspect holding a carefully ordained and logical place in the overall plan. This attention to structural cohesion and logical presentation is found in all Tacitus's work, within the annalistic practice (5), on the smaller and the larger scale, and was clearly important to his methods of construction.

The first Roman penetration into Germany took place only some hundred and fifty years before Tacitus's composition of the Germania, with the military invasion of Julius Caesar in 55 A.D., following his campaigns in Gaul. From this time onwards, Roman affairs were irrevocably tied up with Germany, and always to a large extent, for Germnay was potentially a great threat to Roman domination and therefore required constant military attention, unlike Gaul, which rarely figures in Roman history after Caesar's conquest, or Judaea, so totally subject that it posed little threat. Thus a good number of Romans spent part of their life in or near Germany, serving to increase Roman knowledge of this northern land.

Previously, the Greek geographers had only a vague awareness of this area (6). Pytheas of Massilia (d. c.285 B.C.) shows little knowledge, and his successor Eratosthenes (276-

c.196 B.C.) was equally ignorant about Northern Europe, although he has at least heard tell of the Hercynian Forest (7). However, the Greeks can hardly be considered as influential sources for Tacitus's knowledge and portrayal of Germany.

Consequentially, the sources used were mainly Roman, and one and a half centuries after Caesar's invasion, there was a large body of potential sources of information covering the land and peoples of Germany. Supposing poetic sources still available to us to give a romanticised view exaggerating popular knowledge, often for propagandist purposes (8), they can hardly constitute a reliable factual source for the work of Tacitus, although popularly held opinion must have influenced his method of portrayal, adding atmosphere to the context, a feature which he does not consider alien to historical writing. So leaving these aside for more prosaic descriptions of Germany based on more accurate observation or information, we find three main groups of potential sources:

1. Accounts now lost, either geographical or historical, whose content may be speculated or which are quoted by later authorities.
2. Accounts which partly or wholly remain available to us, both Greek and Latin.
3. Oral sources, military or trade; eye-witness accounts.

Certain of these possible sources are more likely than others to have been utilised, as we shall see, though Tacitus's unwillingness to quote his authorities makes no hypothesis conclusive.

If then we consider each of the authorities whom we know to have existed, we can make tentative suggestions as to how far if at all Tacitus may have been fed and influenced by

each. Written sources on Germany, no longer extant, were composed by the historians Titus Livius, Cremutius Cordus, Seneca, Curtius Rufus, Pliny the Elder and Aufidius Bassus, the poet Pomponius Secundus, and the memoirs of Agrippina and Domitius Corbulo.

Livy (59 B.C.-17 A.D.) is known to have described Germany and its peoples in his Book 104, preceding the account of Caesar's campaign against Ariovistus, after the Gallic campaigns described, along with a geographical account of Gaul, in Book 103, and before the description and narrative of the invasion of Britain inBook 105 (9). It is difficult to judge how large a place geographical description was given by Livy, but we know that Tacitus was at least aware of Livy's account of Britain (10), and it seems probable that the description of Germany in the preceding book was equally well known to him. Lundstrom considers that Tacitus did use Livy as one of his three main sources on Germany for the Germania (11), reaching this conclusion on historiaal and linguistic grounds (Tacitus's use of the word nuper is wrong for the period of composition, and can only be explained as a direct quotation from Livy; the phrase quos bellum aperuit is Livian.) So Livy is a likely source, though to what extent remains unknown.

Aulus Cremutius Cordus, who committed suicide in 25 A.D., wrote on the period of the Civil War up to 18 B.C., and was distinctly Republican in sentiment. However, although Rome considered part of Germany to be under her control during this period, little intervention was in fact taking place until towards the end of Augustus's reign, and thus it is unlikely t that Cremutius had much to contribute to Roman knowledge of the country.

L. Annaeus Seneca (the Elder), on the other hand, whose life covered the years 55 B.C. to c.40 A.D., composed a historical work spanning his own lifetime, which must therefore have included some report of the campaigns of Drusus, Tiberius and Germanicus during the reigns of Augustus and Tiberius, the period in which a great deal of reliable information was to be brought back to Rome. We are aware of no special source of knowledge available to Seneca, but judging by historiographical precedent, it seems feasible that some geographical facts would have been included, especially since his son the Younger Seneca shows some interest in geography (12). However, any such reference would only be slight.

Curtius Rufus, the legate of Upper Germany in 47 A.D., and consul some years previously, may perhpas be equated with the historian of the same name; due to his military career being spent in the country, he is possibly better qualified than Seneca to provide information on Germany, perhaps by means of the Elder Pliny, his contemporary and co-militant on the Rhine (13). The style of Curtius would be such as to appeal to Tacitus: dramatic, emotional and vivid, though the subject of Alexander the Great is far removed from German affairs.

The loss of much of the Elder Pliny's work has resulted in major controversy over how far he could have influenced Tacitus. Tacitus was aclose friend of the Younger Pliny and through him must have met his uncle frequently. Since Pliny spent twelve years serving on the Rhine (47-58 A.D.), and had an insatiable curiosity and desire to note all kinds of facts, he would have been the perfect source, and, despite his sudden death in 79 A.D., left behind a number of works of relevance here: the Bella Germaniae consisted of twenty books covering

the history of all the wars fought between the Romans and the Germans up to about 47 A.D. Pliny's rather pedantic and encyclopaedic approach to composition as seen in the Natural Histories, his only surviving work, would have been reflected in all his writings, so, particularly since he tells us little about Germany in this extant work, it is reasonable to assume that his account of the German Wars would have contained a large amount of geographical and ethnographical detail where relevant, following tradition and his own special interest. Here especially, but also in the places where apt in his other major historical work, a fine Aufidii Bassi, which is likely to have covered the period from the early forties to the early seventies, we will have been given a picture of Germany by an eye-witness who must have known the land extremely well, and who believed no detail to be superfluous. This was probably the source closest to Tacitus, and although many scholars feel that far too much weight is placed upon this, it would seem unlikely that Tacitus would not have utilised such a source heavily. Even though the Bella Germaniae was more relevant to the subject of certain books of the Annals, this is not to say that they could not provide material equally useful for the Germania.

Another historian dealing with events in Germany is Aufidius Bassus himself, not so closely linked to Tacitus except through Pliny; he composed a Bellum Germanicum, a laudatory account of Tiberius's achievements in Germany over the years 4-16 A.D. This was meant as a panegyric rather than a didactic work, and thus any geographical detail would be purely incidental, if indeed it existed at all. So with Fabius Rusticus, whose history may have covered the revolt of Civilis in 69 A.D.,

and who had some interest in geography (14). The poet Pomponius Secundus may indirectly have been a source, as he was a friend of the Elder Pliny, his biographer, and spent part of his career as legate of Upper Germany, conquering the Chatti in 50 A.D. (15).

Another genre of composition which may involve some geographic or ethnographic content is that of Memoirs or commentarii, such as written by the Younger Agrippina (15-59 A.D.), daughter of Germanicus and mother of the Emperor Nero, who was born at Cologne (Colonia Claudia Ara Augusta Agrippinensium) and spent much of her life in Germany (16). This may have been available to Tacitus through access to the Imperial records, and was another eye-witness account. With perhaps more reason, Gn. Domitius Corbulo has been proposed as Tacitus's informant on Germany as well as on Armenia. This man was legate of Lower Germany in 47 A.D. and carried out a campaign against the Chauci (17), finishing his career in German land by constructing a canal between the rivers Meuse (Mosa) and Rhine before moving on to the East.

It is easy to hypothesise about what accounts could have been used by Tacitus, but far harder to substantiate any proposal, since the original texts are no longer available to us. Indeed even with extant material we cannot always be certain whether or not Tacitus had access to each source or whether he utilised it. Linguistic and topical comparisons can take us some way towards a conclusion, at least, with slightly more reliability than the unknown factor of lost sources.

Julius Caesar may be considered a primary source for general Roman awareness of Germany, for his invasion of the country made a significant mark on Roman history; his seven

books de Bello Gallico, covering the years 58-52 B.C. include a substantial amount of description of Germany, from his own knowledge in the case of the Rhine area and by repute in the case of regions further afield. Caesar has three separate accounts of Germany (reckoning each to be genuinely Caesarian (18): at B.G. I, 30-54; IV, 1-19; and VI, 21-29. The first is of little interest to us here, since it deals with the campaign against Ariovistus, taking place entirely on the Gallic side of the Rhine, with few geographical details. The second bears much resemblance to Tacitus's own methods of portrayal in that it begins with four sections on the ethnography and history of the Suebi, and this could have supplied a precedent for the later historian, as the description of the Meuse and Rhine in section 10 may have influenced Tacitus's account of the German rivers (19). Sections 16-19 deal with Caesar's decision to cross the Rhine, significant action in itself, but resulting in some ethnographic and geographic facts being recounted incidentally, as a number of tribes are forcibly involved in events. Book VI treats the Gallic and German tribes in similar fashion, with incidental comments, up to section 11, at which point Caesar makes a clear digression away from contemporary history to produce what might be called a comparative ethnographical study of the Germans and Gauls, very closely linked in subject matter to the Germania and nearer than almost any other excerpt from Caesar to the type of digression favoured by Tacitus (20). It deals with religion, military activities, social customs, agriculture, politics, warfare, history, some geography and mythology: all the same topics as interest Tacitus. We will see better how much common thought and influence there is in fact later, when studying the Germania in greater detail, but for the

moment it is important to note the similarities of genre and content. Eymer (21) covers this question of how far Caesar was used by Tacitus, concluding that he was used extensively, though not exclusively nor even in entirety, and that the approach and aim of each historian is widely divergent, though the same facts are used. This would seem a reasonable contention, and many scholars agree upon at least some use of Caesar as source material, though not as sole authority (22). Additionally, in Germ. 28, Caesar is actually named by Tacitus, proving his awareness of the contents of the de Bello Gallico:

> validiores olim Gallorum res fuisse summus auctorum divus Julius tradit

in itself a rather unexpected reference from Tacitus.

Moving on to another historian, Velleius Paterculus, we know that this man served in Germany and Pannonia for eight years up to 7 A.D. under Tiberius, and that his histories cover events in Germany during the campaigns of Drusus (a very brief account in 2.97) and the Varian disaster of 9 A.D. (2.117-120) neither of which narratives are primarily concerned with topographical details. Any such description only occurs when it illuminates the laudatory nature of the work, to show up Tiberius well, such as at 2.105-106, where the tribal names signify victory, and references like transitus Visurgis, penetrata ulteriora; a Rheno usque ad flumen Albim etc. (23) are added merely as hyperbolic descriptions of Tiberius's achievements, and this makes their accuracy questionable. There would not seem to have been enough material to use Velleius as a source, though the methods by which he includes fragments of what must have been his large personal knowledge of the country are highly reminiscent of Tacitus's own use of geography, though this

applies to the Histories and Annals rather than to the Germania, whose purpose is somewhat different. Thus we may rule out the possibility of Velleius having any factual influence.

Pliny the Elder we have already discussed to some extent. Looking now at the only extant work, the Natural Histories, we can note how little is said about Germany (24), which is surely surprising, to say the least, for such a profuse author whose sole aim here is to produce a full geographical account of the known world, particularly since of all countries Germany is the place of which he has intimate personal knowledge. There are two concievable reasons for this, firstly that he feels that Germany is already well enough known or described elsewhere, and secondly that he himself has given a full account in his usual style elsewhere. The latter proposition is surely the more tenable, since it would be unlike Pliny to omit facts, even the most familiar and unoriginal.

What we are given in the Natural Histories is a brief summary of the northern coast and a list of tribes and rivers, none of which, except for the Rhine, receives more than a mention. Yet the Rhine description in itself is sufficient evidence that the observant Pliny had a thorough personal knowledge of German geography, and this would doubtless extend to the people as well. Even in these few sections we find the same elements of geography and ethnography, and if indeed, as seems probable, there were a large scale account elsewhere, this would make Pliny the ideal and unquestionably the major though not the only source for Tacitus.

The geographer Strabo (c.64 B.C.-c.21 A.D.) deals with Northern Europe in the seventh of his seventeen books (25). His description is much longer than that of Pliny although all

his knowledge must have been at second hand. He uses as guidelines the rivers Danube and Rhine, and the Hercynian Forest, much as Tacitus takes these as starting point, for these are the three geographical elements of Germany most immediately familiar to his readers, in the same way that a modern reader would relate to the name of a capital town of a country he has never seen. There are a few ethnographical details (sect. 3) and lists of tribes, and some attempt to describe the history of the land in connection with Rome (sect. 4), and a final collection of geographical facts on the Hercynian Forest and the Bodensee. His account would appear to be more a medley of generally known facts than an attempt to add anything of significance to the body of contemporary geographical knowledge. Even if Tacitus knew his work, which is doubtful, it would have told him little that closer sources could not already have stated.

Pomponius Mela, another geographer of the following generation to Strabo, produced a short but interesting description of the Germans and their country (26), which takes a similar approach to that of Tacitus and bears comparison, although there are differences. Mela was writing some sixty years before the compiling of the Germania, and there is a strong possibility that the two authors had a common source (the lost Book 104 of Livy perhaps?). Still, Mela cannot be considered a significant possibility. Nor too can the descriptions of Germany found in such authors as Pedo, the officer referred to by Tacitus (27), whose experiences in Germany under Germanicus are reflected in his poetry. Any influence on Tacitus would have emerged in the poetic and picturesque account of Germanicus's return journey in the Annals (28) and not in the prosaic and factual Germania.

Thus none of the extant sources can be considered a

major contributor to Tacitus's descriptions of Germany, so we t turn instead to consider our third conjecture: his use of oral sources. These must have been numerous, considering the amount of Roman activity in the area. Tacitus must have had many acquaintances who had served in Germany at some time, or who had passed on information from their own friends and relatives. Pliny must figure again here, as it is impossible to conceive that the two had not spoken on many occasions, and even if the idea of a work like the Germania had not occurred to Tacitus before the death of the elder man in 79, Pliny was hardly the man to be reticent about describing his own military experiences on the Rhine.

Official military reports from Trajan's campaigns (as well as government records from earlier operations) must have reached Tacitus through the Senate, filling in more of the picture. Reports from trading concerns too would have reached Rome, and this was a vital source of information on the more distant areas throughout the Greek and Roman periods, though the reliability of such accounts is more dubitable than military accounts. Probably a mixture of information is incorporated depending what was available on any particular area.

There have been suggestions that Tacitus himself served in Germany during the years 89-93 A.D., thus explaining his interest in the country, but there is no documentary evidence, and indeed Tacitus himself would seem to refute this (29) by his use of such words as fama (30), satis notum (31) and perhaps most tellingly:

> haec in commune de omnium Germanorum origine ac moribus accepimus (32).

He makes no claim to have seen anything for himself. The only

support for Tacitus ever having lived in Germany is weak: Pliny the Elder's reference (33) to a Cornelius Tacitus who must have lived in Gallia Belgica at about the time when Pliny was serving on the Rhine, and therefore could have been Tacitus's father or another close relative. This would help to explain the connection between the two younger men Pliny and Tacitus, and if indeed this was Tacitus's relative could also explain his interest in Germany, if his early years were spent there, and the seeming lack of personal knowledge. Yet we have nothing apart from a name, though it would be valuable to know that there was such a connection.

In conclusion, then, Tacitus appears to have employed a number of different sources as it suited him, but his major authority was surely Pliny, probably through a lost account. Caesar and Livy also played some part in this matter, though to a lesser extent, and oral sources must have influenced him. So the Germania is an amalgamation of varied sources of information, selectively used, but relying basically on a few written texts, with little original research.

Although not strictly a digression within a larger historical work, the Germania might justifiably be considered along with those passages of a geographical nature which do occur in the course of Tacitus's historical writings, since many of the features which it contains are similar in material and treatment to such episodes as Agricola 10-13 on Britain and Histories V, 1-13 on Judaea and other shorter passages elsewhere, and they tend to serve comparable aims. Obviously, we cannot as it stands regard the Germania as fulfilling a specific purpose in its context, as do most of the parallel episodes in

Tacitus's work, since it has been transmitted to us as an independent account (whether or not this is in fact so we shall consider later) so that we must look beyond the possibility of any significant juxtaposition or thought connection in seeking the reason for its composition.

Indeed, modern scholars have had difficulty both in knowing how to describe this work and in deciding under which literary genre it might be subsumed, some proposals being that it was intended as political propaganda and an ethnographical tract (35), in the Sallustian mode; a monograph or treatise (36), or a work of occasion, a digression with moral and political overtones (37).

Perhaps the main divergence of scholarly opinion on the Germania is on the question of whether it was intended as an independent work at the time of its composition, or whether it was linked either preparatorily or bodily with the subsequent work of Tacitus, the Histories, which deals with events from the murder of the Emperor Galba in 69 A.D., through the reigns of Otho, Vitellius and the Flavians up to the contemporary situation. We know that Tacitus had already considered setting out to compose such a work, before or during the preparation of the Germania (38), and that the events covered by the period concerned included large scale disturbances and military activity on the Rhine and through Germany, such as the revolt of Civilis and the Batavians in 69-70 A.D., and Domitians campaigns of 79-83 A.D. against the Chatti, which would each involve a proportionately substantial amount of description of happenings in Germany, so that this factor must also be considered. Syme's view (39) is that if there were any link between the two works, there would be more in the way of military references such as to

the sites of legionary stations for the reader to refer back to at relevant points in the Histories, whereas in fact no such elements are included in the Germania, which concentrates on Germany almost to the exclusion of any Roman elements (though Tacitus cannot resist the urge to add historical details). But could it not be that Tacitus put in the Roman references only where they were necessary, i.e. in the historical account rather than in the geo-ethnographical preparation? He may well have assumed in his readers a basic awareness of the major fortifications of the Rhineland, especially after reports of the recent campaigns of Domitian and Trajan in the North (80's-90's A.D.). Tacitus is writing to enlighten ignorance more than to reinforce general knowledge, as the well known names of military sites could be.

On the other hand, Paratore's opinion (37) is too extreme, for his conviction that the Germania must be an excursus intended for and even mislaid from the Histories leads him to state uncompromisingly (40) that the tract belongs to the description of the Batavian uprising in Histories IV and V, and therefore occurred at the beginning or during the course of Book IV. This would confuse the chronology for the work's compilation, as it would mean that Tacitus was working on the Germania and the Histories simultaneously. It is surely more logical to assume that Tacitus's decision to compose the Germania stemmed from other motives than merely the preparation of an excursus to the larger work, partly because it is more extensive and wider in subject matter than the other digressions in Tacitus's writings (though Germany is a large and complex subject to describe, and even the forty-six sections allotted to it here in the Germania only begin to cover all aspects of the country),

and partly because we do know that it was composed in 98 A.D., and almost certainly preceded the Histories, even if the idea had already germinated in Tacitus's mind. It is likely that he was aware of the importance of Germany to the history of the times which he was intending to cover, and of the future necessity of describing the land in the traditional historiographical manner (since apart from incidental detail we have no description of Germany in the Histories as they remain to us: surely unusual, when Germany is so much a part of the events in the early books?); the Germania is then in some senses a preparatory study of the country and the type of people living in it, to be read as an introduction to the later work rather than alongside it, and therefore omits as far as possible any Roman content in order to give an unbiased picture of the land and its inhabitants before the Roman presence is irrevocably imposed on it (41).

Yet even though it serves as an introduction, we cannot surely believe that Tacitus had planned the Histories in such detail already that the Germania could be immediately integrated at any particular point, for it reads as a self-contained work and would have to be substantially altered to agree with Tacitus's normal methods of geographical description, where the placing of the account in context is of vital importance. Thus the Germania could never have been part of the Histories, although it is significant as background material to prepare the reader and to help him to understand the Germans and the non-Roman viewpoint (42).

This leads us into a consideration of the moral issues posed by the Germania and of how far moral ethics formed a part of Tacitus's intentions. There are admittedly several points

in his works at which Tacitus's view of moral issues becomes apparent, and the Germania is no exception. Tacitus possesses immense skill in revealing his own attitudes and prejudices without stating them outright, but allowing the ideas to filter through by implicit remarks which in fact strengthen the origimal thought rather than the reverse (43). It is clear that Tacitus feels sympathy and grudging admiration for Syme's "northern barbarians"(44), though this stands out mainly in contrast to Roman attitudes as we shall see later, and in certain aspects such as military prowess (sect.14) and morality (sect. 19) more than in other specific social elements, nor is the treatment of Germany exclusively eulogistic. The Germania is not the only work of Tacitus to portray the "noble savage" view of Rousseau (45), for it appears at many points, and especially within speeches (46). Tacitus is well aware that this type of social ethnological composition is a rhetorical commonplace (47), and as such would lose some of its impetus, but moral thought is still unquestionably present throughout the Germania.

Despite this, as Anderson (48) points out, to regard the Germania as a moral treatise would mean that the second half of the work consists of almost totally superfluous material. Yet even so, the moral aspect is too deeply implanted elsewhere as a part of Tacitus's own character and attitude that it cannot surely be considered specifically part of the intention of the Germania; it should rather be seen as a theme which is so innate that Tacitus is hardly aware of its presence any longer. If his plan had been to provide a striking and critical comparison between German and Roman, he could have set about the issue in a far more blatant manner, whereas we are left with the feeling that the Germans have some worthy qualities, and

yet are still barbarians.

So instead we turn to the question of how far the purpose of the Germania was political. It has already been pointed out (p. 97 above) that Germany was very much a topical subject in 98 A.D., the date of composition, due to Trajan's presence on the Rhine during the Suebic War. The delayal of his return to Roma as a result of problems on the northern frontier caused some difficulties as Trajan had not yet visited the capital as Emperor (he had been in Cologne on the death of Nerva). It was politically expedient for the people in Rome to understand the problems leading to Trajan's decision to stay in Germany for so long, and it is certainly conceivable that Tacitus saw the time as politically useful for the publication of a work explaining the long-term threat posed by Germany and the North, hence the frequent references to military activities and arms (49): undeniably important themes in the Germania. It would be in line with Imperial policy, and could thus affect Tacitus's own advancement, as it would by implication serve to eulogise Trajan, by stressing the strength and virtue of the Germans and thus too Trajan's own achievement in conquering this hardy and militaristic people (50).

Yet again, as with the question of his moral intentions, Tacitus could have made the political side of the work more open and explicit, instead of ignoring the Roman aspects with the exception of two points (51), neither of which make any reference to Trajan, the second being historical, emphasising the threat of Germany to Rome; the first perhaps of more contemporary interest, with the current doubtful situation in the North.

Paratore's opinion that this work is an excursus to

the Histories published early for political purposes (52) is too far-fetched for reasons seen earlier (p.111f. above), though it could certainly be agreed that even if the aim of the work was non-political, Tacitus specifically chose to publish at this particular time his "work of occasion" (53), knowing that contemporary events would help its success.

The Germania could perhaps be considered as a work composed in order to expound Tacitus's own particular interests, and we have already considered to what extent Tacitus has a personal interest or knowledge of Germany (p.108f.). However, more than that: Tacitus's opinions on a wider plane pervade the text, as in his respect for the militarism of the Germans, their libertas (54) (a well-worn topic in Tacitus), morality, virtue, correct priorities (e.g. with regard to wealth), democratic government and justice, all so different from what one knew and tolerated in Rome.

His interests could be said to include his historical approach to any form of writing: as the Agricola contains more historical material than biography or eulogy, with each aspect intertwined, so too in the Germania we find historical elements cropping up frequently (such as sect. 37 on the Cimbri), or implicitly in the mention of the name of a tribe or place (such as the Frisian Lakes in sect. 34 or the Elbe in sect. 41 (55)), and although history and geography were traditionally seen as inseparable (see chapters 7 and 8), Tacitus perhaps feels more need than his predecessors to include historical elements in what is basically a non-historical work, just as he includes geographical remarks at all points in his historical writings, not merely in one specifically introductory passage as would most of his forerunners.

Another possibility is that the Germania was meant to be didactic, which would support the theory of an introduction tothe Histories as well as explaining the work in itself. Yet much of the Germania is unoriginal, a collection and summary of available knowledge, saying little that is new, which casts doubt upon the suggestion that its aim was didactic. Much potentially relevant material is omitted, and not enough detail is given even of the best known areas, though Tacitus clearly knows far more than he actually describes, as we nan tell from the incidental comments he adds in other works.

This leaves only the discussion of whether the Germania was meant as pure entertainment, written for the amusement and slight edification of Tacitus's readers: the upper classes of Roman citizens, who wished to be entertained rather than taught by what they read. This theory would explain the lack of detail, as Syme's comment on Tacitus's geographical description shows (56). The Germania represents, then, a basis account with some easily followed motifs running through, on a topic of general interest at the time,as well as some interest in a slightly foreign and distant land, different enough to seem exotic (57), yet also bearing enough similarity to Roman thought and culture to allow respect for a people who if not equal were at least not subservient.

The recurrent themes, such as militarism in particular, politics, a high moral sense and lack of knowledge of the vice and corruption which 'civilisation' can bring, provide unity and coherence in structure; there is plenty of variety within the subject: different aspects to pursue, different features in every tribe, and constant antitheses and contrasts implied between Rome and Germany, both people and land, as the

view of Germany is continually set against that of Rome (58). The religious elements (e.g. sect. 10 on sacred horses) and mythological stories (sect. 46) add stimuli to the imagination, and the picture we receive of Germany is colourful, realistic, credible and full enough to give a reasonable impression, even to the twentieth century reader, of Germany as it was in the first century A.D.

We have then considered a number of possible aims of the Germania, concluding that it was almost certainly intended as some form of geo-ethnographical introduction to the Histories, before the composition of the latter work, though not part of it, and that it was meant to be entertaining. There are moral, political, historical and didactic overtones, but none of these override the prime intentions of the Germania.

In all Tacitus's works we find great stress laid upon the delineation of character, frequently brought out by using the topographical circumstances as a foil against which the particular qualities are shown. We see this with Germanicus in the first books of the Annals, Titus and his brother Domitian in Histories V (chapter 2), Tiberius in Capri (Ann.IV, 67-chapter 1) and other lesser characters. In each of these cases the type of country is set against the individual, showing him up as strong and heroic in his ability to subdue the country through facing up to the terrain against all natural odds and conquering it along with the people, as with Germanicus, Titus and Agricola, or else has the reverse effect of proving the weakness or evil character of the individual in contrast to the beauty of the land, as with Tiberius. The Germania is rather different in that no one character is depicted in the context of the topography, but

instead the personality of the German nature as a whole emerges in relation to the land. The Germans and Germany are very closely linked in nature: hard, savage and uncompromising, so that in describing either, the other is by implication included in the description (59). Examples of this can be seen in section 2 of the treatise:

> quis porro....Asia aut Africa autItalia relicta Germaniam peteret, informem terris, asperam caelo, tristem cultu aspectuque, nisi si patria sit?

conjecturing a natural inclination to one's own land; or influence of the terrain on one's way of life, as in the account of habitation in section 16. Again in the record of the Chatti, the description of the area is immediately followed by characterisation:

> effusis ac palustribus locis....durant siquidem colles, paulatim rarescunt....duriora genti corpora, stricti artus, minax vultus et maior animi vigor (sect.30)

interlinking physical and mental characteristics, a connection most strongly brought out between sections 4 and 5.

The nature of the country supports the German cause by its hostility to Roman invasion, as we see throughout the Annals and the Histories, such as the trouble at the pontes longi (Ann. I, 63) or the storm during Germanicus's sea voyage (Ann.II, 23-24). Thus it is no contradiction to juxtapose geography and mores as in this treatise, for to the Roman way of thinking, they are inseparably interlinked.

There is however another aspect to this, which has already been touched upon above: the German people do not only stand out in relation to their country, but also are implicitly shadowed by the figure of the typical Roman. Germany personified takes on and opposes Rome personified. This is found particular-

ly in the accounts of morality such as section 19, which is almost an explicit denunciation of contemporary Roman morals:

> nemo enim illic vitia ridet, nec corrumpere et corrumpi saeculum vocatur....plusque ibi boni mores valemt quam alibi bonae leges. (60).

So in politics autocracy is unknown, but one's own virtues and strengths bring one to power (sect. 13), and respect for the gods has not been lost (sect 9-10), nor are humans deified (sect.8)

> venerati sunt, non adulatione nec tamquam facerent deas

All this is indubitably meant to imply great contrast with Rome, where the sense of priorities is totally alien to that of Germany. Honour is a vital aspect of German existence, and shame cannot be borne (sect. 6). This honour is composed in its essence through war and victory, without the so-called 'civilisation' of Rome, the humanitas of Agr.21, which brings dishonour with its changed priorities. Paratore (61) explores the moral aspects of the Germania still further, looking into the social systems in operation.

Tacitus wishes us to respect this figure of Germany and does not need to draw the parallels explicitly; to do so would merely weaken his proposition.

Obviously the contrast must also be apparent between the countries concerned, in the geographical as well as the moral sense. The geographical description of Germany is not extensive, but full enough to give us a coherent general picture, backed up by the human characteristics, as we shall see later. There is no neeed to describe Italy and Rome, as they were familiar enough, but this contrast is present: the cold, wild and hostile northern lands against the civilised warm and open areas of Italy. Tacitus's powers of vivid description bring this

country to life, especially for a Roman who may not have experienced the type of country found in Northern Europe.

In his historical works, Tacitus tends to structure his writing in a geographical manner by concentrating on and juxtaposing events in vastly different quarters of the known world: for example, in the Histories, Northern Italy, Rome, Germany and Judada appear in turn, each bearing opposed characteristics which cast the others into sharper relief by their conjunction. In the Germania we have only the implicit comparison with more familiar territory, but precisely because of its familiarity the same effect is achieved.

However, within the Germania there are contrasts, between the individual accounts of the tribes. The uniformity of the German figure begins to be broken down into more individual facts, influenced to a certain extent by the area inhabited by each tribe. It is obvious that the regions closest to the Roman Provinces, i.e. the Rhineland and southern areas, will be those with whose peoples and peculiarities the Romans are best acquainted through close contact, and as Warmington (62) remarks, the fact that the tribes most distant are those least fully described is realistic, and a sign of Tacitus's own reliability as an authority.

Though to Tacitus's mind there are distinct German characteristics, he knows well enough that it is still a nation of individuals, and that there are tribal characteristics just as there are national elements of personality (such as the warlike Cimbri of section 37 or the peaceful Cherusci of the previous section). Each tribe is briefly accounted for by its name, location, historical significance and any aspects of its habits, political, religious or other, which differ from the standard

view of the German. The names are straightforward, some implying further thoughts, others of no significance except as a part of the cataloguing process or as a touch of the exotic. The locating of tribes must of necessity be only a vague estimate, as there are few guidelines to follow: certain rivers such as the Rhine, Danube, Elbe, the Ocean; the vague extent of the Hercynian forest, the Alps. Even directional remarks such as north, south etc. are almost entirely omitted, so that our impression of areas and boundaries can only be shadowy, and Tacitus falls back on words such as proximi, ulteriores, exteriores as methods of geggraphical description - hardly precise, to say the least (63).

This lack of precision is again evidence of Tacitus's unscientific approach and non-pedantic purpose. A didactic work would demand fuller detail on such questions, unlike a work meant to entertain. The tribes are thus compared and contrasted in turn, with the emphasis placed consistently on militarism, summed up in the digression on the Cimbri in section 37: a potted history of the Romano-Germanic Wars stressing the difficulty of conquest, and therefore too the propagandist view, and the reason for the preponderence of accounts of German events in his historical works. Despite the individual differences between the tribes they still belong to a single generic grouping far from the Roman attitude of mind and habitual sphere of activity.

So the Germania is full of contrasts, both implicit and explicit, which all add to the achievement of Tacitus's aims in its composition as well as providing structure and variety in the work.

Considering the Germania in greater detail then, we can discuss specific themes or areas through closer reference to the text. For example, the topic of geographical/topographical description. This appears incidentally throughout the Germania, but especially in to initial sections (1-5). The first section has been fully discussed by Lundström (11), but it is perhaps worth commenting on Tacitus's choice of vocabulary, not only here but in the remainder of the Germania also, used to create the maximum impression with the minimum of words. Tacitus is always aware of the dramatic aspects of any situation, including the topographical situation, and how to provide the right atmosphere which is imaginative and yet realistic. The phrase mutuo metu aut montibus with its alliteration and the unexpected juxtaposition of the emotive and geographical adds force to the thought of the mountaineous country, with the suggestion of fear transferred from the people to the land. So too Tacitus tends towards vocabulary which emphasises the hostile and unwelcoming aspects of Germany, such as inaccesso, praecipiti vertiee and even inmensa (the unconquerable width and depth of the Ocean). This is contrasted with the opposite type of land in the southern areas by the Danube (sect. 1, 3) molli et clementer edito, with a total change of mood and an insistence on its more habitable nature.

However, the return to the original atmosphere is not long delayed. Section 2 tells of the inmensus adversus Oceanus, the periculum horridi et ignoti maris, and even after this obstacle has been surmounted, we are faced by still worse:

informem terris, asperam caelo, tristem cultu aspectuque

This theme is taken up again in section 5, referring to the forests and bogs, part of the standard view of the nation:

silvis horrida aut paludibus foeda, umidior...ventosior ...ferax, frugiferarum arborum inpatiens, pecorum fecunda, sed plerumque inprocera.

Hardly a pleasant impression, and even if some of the elements are conventional, this does not prohibit their truth. The land requires respect and courage, like its inhabitants, and tends to repel those who do not belong, a tendency borne out not only by the country but also by armed action.

The same features recur: the inaccessibility, the climate, the bogs (c.f. sect. 12 where criminals are submerged in the marshes and swamps), and the forests, with their residing spirits of divinity (sect. 7+39) adding an awesomeness and eerie quality peculiar to this type of scenery.

The Ocean which obstitit (sect. 34) is a constant theme as is the Rhine, which figures frequently. This river is the border between known and unknown, civilised and uncivilised, habitable and inhabitable:

proximi Chattis certum iam alveo Rhenum quique terminus esse sufficiat Usipi ac Tencteri colunt (sect. 32)

Tacitus has detailed knowledge of this area, in fact of the Rhine as far as the sea, as is shown by his description of the Frisian lands and lakes in section 34 (and elsewhere in his works) and of the mouth of the Rhine in section 1. It is clear from the Histories and Annals that Tacitus's awareness of the Rhine, from whatever source, is unquestionably good, and at all times the sense of the Rhine as a frontier protrudes :

vetera imperii munimenta (Hist. IV, 26)

The country serves as its own protection (fluminibus aut silvis muniuntur sect. 40), warding off any invaders through all the aspects brought out by Tacitus. He has little to say about any

pleasant elements of the land, for his intention is to stress the hostile nature of Germany to cause a psychological effect on the reader, and to ensure the correct attitude towards the tribe and towards any moral or political intentions. The geography is constantly employed to reinforce this attitude.

The theme of morality is another recurrent idea, already dealt with in some detail above, but meriting further comment. The Germans are not to be thought of as consistently and uniformly good; after all, they are still barbarians. Their moral bearing is a direct result of circumstances:

frigora atque inediam caelo soloque adsueverunt (sect. 4)

just as their situation has kept the Germans from the evils of wealth and luxury:

argentum et aurum propitiine an irati di negaverint dubito (sect.5)

so that their morality is conditioned not innate, and at that is controlled by the lack of certain elements which (implicitly) contribute to the Roman moral attitude. Their religious sense is considered rather naive and uncivilised, though there is a qualified respect for the existence of religious belief where in more 'civilised' countries all piety has been lost. Justice plays a major role in the life of the tribes, who react violently to any wrongdoing. The whole of section 12 covers the German system of punishment, showing that most acts considered criminal ensue from military misbehaviour (desertion, cowardice, cruelty etc.). To avoid war in any way is a fault, yet inaction in everyday life is not, a weakness in our eyes, but acceptable to the German:

cum idem homines sic ament inertiam et oderint quietam (sect. 15)

Their moral sense can easily be corrupted, as we see from the end of the same section:

iam et pecuniam accipere docuimus

Tacitus stresses as the most notable moral feature their attitude to marriage. Sections 18-20 cover this aspect of German life. Monogamy is praised, as is chastity and faithfulness, the foundations of society which lead to its strength. Violent punishment for any other behaviour prevents a change in standards, amd it is for this part of German life that Tacitus shows his greatest respect: this is how society ought to behave, the mores maiorum, opposing vice and immorality to concentrate on the ideals which bind society together.

There are vices in Germany though, of their own making, not imported from Rome, such as intemperance (sect. 23) and gambling (sect. 24) even to the extent of risking enslavement. Yet despite these, they are a race made strong by their way of life, and even by their way of death (sect.27). Thus Tacitus lines their virtues alongside their corresponding faults: a realistic approach, yet stressing their strong sense of public and private morality.

In the same way, Tacitus shows his great respect for the Germans' military prowess, and their concentration upon "affaires d'armes". This is intrinsically connected to their moral sensibility, showing, as Tacitus believes, their correct sense of priorities. There are few places in the Germania which do not include some mention of military matters, since it is so much a part of the German way of life, upon which all their existence is based. It affects their relationships with one another, with women and children, their politics, their morality, their religion, and even their death. This preoccupation

with fighting is seen as a strength, and in no manner weak or even unnecessarily headstrong, but is almost a source of life, as maybe it is a source of preservation (certainly true in an inter-tribal sense) from obliteration by invaders.

As stated above, morality, militarism and politics are all interconnected, and all recall the virtues of the prisca Romanitas. It is in a military and moral light that leaders are chosen (sect. 7), and even then power is not channelled into the hands of one man, but through a mixture of oligarchy and democracy (the military leaders taking the authority), decisions of all kinds are made:

> de minoribus rebus principes consultant, de maioribus omnes (sect. 11)

This is again part of their sense of justice. Hero- or leader-worship is unthinkable in the social context, where all have the opportunity to aim at leadership through personal bravery, from an equal beginning, with no class system.

Concluding this consideration of the sources, aims and intentions of Tacitus's Germania, we find that of a large number of potential sources, the Elder Pliny, supplemented possibly by Tacitus's own family and upbringing, would seem to be the most plausible suggestion, though this does not in any way preclude the ulilisation of other material. There were a number of possible reasons for the work's composition, the most likely being that it was intended in some way to be introductory description for later historical works including accounts of events in Germany (the Histories), yet also had political motivation, and a desire to entertain with a varied, non-technical and interesting ethnographical account of a nation far removed

geographically and socially from the Roman sphere. The thesis also shows Tacitus's ability to portray a place emotively and with credibility, through limited description, and to create a real feeling of the pervasive atmosphere of Germany and of the attitude of the Germans, and it is in this that the Germania is highly successful.

Supplement: Annals I, 60-62

The Site of the Varian Disaster

In contrast to the portrayal of Germany in the Germania, we may consider this 'showpiece' passage as an example of how Tacitus presents the country in the course of his historical narrative. German events predominate in the first two books of the Annals, and this extract forms the climax of Germanicus's exploits in Book I, building up the atmosphere of the terrain and instilling apprehension in the reader, preparing us for the other high points of the text: the battle at the pontes longi (I, 63) and the storm at sea (II, 23).

The destruction of Varus and his three legions in 9 A.D. which effectively halted the Roman advance into Germany, was a major disaster and a cause of shame to the remaining legions, since three eagles had been lost. By once again penetrating as far as this site, Germanicus has regained some of the glory lost six years earlier. Politically and psychologically the achievement demands recognition by Tacitus, who in consequence dwells upon the scene totally out of proportion in the context.

Tacitus begins his description by outlining the route taken to reach the site, which lies close to the Teutoburgiensis saltus. As in the Germania, the landmarks used to describe the route consist of a few large geographical features: the Ems (Amisia), the Lippe (Lupia) and this large extent of almost impenetrable forest, the Teutoburger Wald. Other than this the site is unidentified both by Tacitus and by scholars and archaeologists who have since sought tangible evidence of the disaster. Nor does it need to be located more specifically: if so much of the effect would be lost, and it is this effect which

is central to the importance of the passage. However, some topographical detail is essential to build up the picture of the area:

> praemisso Caecina ut occulta saltuum scrutaretur pontesque et aggeres umido paludum et fallacibus campis inponeret (I, 61)

The site is maestus in nature and in its associations, as well as in its effect upon the participants in the expedition. The device of recall is very strongly used here, as the location, the fortifications, and the evidence of the survivors now present with Germanicus's force all testify. This site is haunted by ghosts of the past, with the supernatural speaking through the written word. Tacitus is exploiting the pathetic aspects of this visit to the full, dramatically showing us two vivid scenes simultaneously: the last moments of a hopeless force and the tragedy of Germanicus's discovery. The camp is empty, dead, holding only the whitened bones of its last defenders, relics of the past:

> medio campi albentia ossa, ut fugerant, ut restiterant, disiecta vel aggerata

Tacitus emphasises the unpleasantness of the site by the careful choice and the weight of the vocabulary: (insepultae, miserationem, visuque ac memoria deformis, mactaverant, infelici). The resultant effect is the arousal of pity for these menwho fought bravely against their destiny, which served them unjustly. Even after such a pitiable death, they were not until now granted the burial which they had merited. No blame is attached to them, merely regret for their fate.

Yet through this Tacitus is using the scene to fulfil other aims: Germanicus has recovered what Varus had lost; Aug-

ustus and Tiberius made no attempt to recover the pride of the Roman armies; Varus failed, but Germanicus has succeeded, while Tiberius remains in Rome, his resentment of his kinsman growing. Germanicus has fulfilled the duty of a true Roman patriot, and has the correct and honourable reaction of grief:

> primum extruendo tumulo caespitem Caesar posuit... doloris socius. quod Tiberio haud probatum, seu cuncta Germanici in deterius trahenti...

This is a theme which recurs throughout Annals I and II as Germanicus and Tiberius are constantly set against each other. So too Varus is compared disfavourably with the present commander. The Germania's implicit contrast of Germany and Italy is continued here, through the soldiers' unfamiliarity and fear of the site, which also anticipates the perils still to come as they march deeper into this hostile and alien territory. Elements of tragedy and defeat are set against courage and victory. All this could be destroyed by any attempt to locate precisely or to describe more fully and prosaically the geographical and topographical aspects of the site. The men accompanying Germanicus are probably no more aware than are Tacitus's readers of their exact position, but they, like us, can feel the atmosphere of their surroundings, and can fear for the future.

So although this passage is primarily concerned with giving us a picture of the scene of the Varian disaster, Tacitus is also using it to display some of the themes which underlie the earlier books of the Annals: particularly to set the laudable characteristics of Germanicus against the weaknesses of Tiberius, but also to set Germanicus against the terrain in which he has gained this reputation, and to provoke particularly strong reactions in this light. The image of Germany which

Tacitus means to instill is unpleasant and foreboding, preparing us for the drama of Germanicus's remaining military activity, and ultimately proving his true heroism in the face of such odds. Even if the scene's pathos is exaggerated, this does not detract from any of its considerable effect.

Notes to Chapter 5

1. Tacitus *Agricola* 10-13.
2. e.g. *Ann.* I-II, *Hist.* V, 14ff. and numerous other occasions.
3. *Germ.* 37: *si ad alterum imperatoris Traiani consulatum computemus.*
4. Bunbury, E.H. (1879), I, 597n2; Tacitus *Germ.*2: *ceterum Germaniae vocabulum recens et nuper additum...*
5. e.g. the alternation between Roman and external affairs in both *Hist.* and *Ann.* (where the theme of Imperialism is constantly reiterated).
6. Bunbury, E.H. (1879), I, 590 (Pytheas); 636 (Eratosthenes).
7. c.f. Caesar *B.G.* VI, 24: *Hercyniam silvam, quam Eratosthenis et quibusdam Graecis fama notam esse video, quam illi Orcyniam appellant.*
8. Chevallier, R. (1961), 8-9, refers to Martial, Statius, Ovid, Lucan.
9. Woodman, A.J. (1977), 107: "Livy described Gaul and Germany (per. 103 *situm Galliarum continet*, 104 *prima pars libri situm Germanias moresque continet*).
10. Tacitus *Agr.*10: *formam totius Britanniae Livius veterum....* Note also the quotation from Livy (V, 36, 6) at Germ. 33: *urgentibus imperii fatis*, and Syme, R. (1958), 46 and n.7.
11. Lundström, V. (1927), 249-264 on *Germ.*1.
12. Seneca the Younger is known to have composed two geographical treatises: *de situ Indiae* and *de situ et sacris Aegyptorum*, also showing his interest elsewhere c.f. *Dial.* III, II, 3.
13. Curtius Rufus is referred to by both Tacitus (*Ann.*XI, 21) and Pliny the Younger (*Epp.* VII, 27, 2).

14. Tacitus Agr.10: formam totius Britanniae... Fabius Rusticus

15. Tacitus Annals XII, 28.

16. Tacitus Ann.IV, 53: repperi in commentariis Agrippinae filiae quae Neronis principis mater vitam suam et casus suorum posteris memoravit.

17. Tacitus Ann.XI, 18-19.

18. See Chapter 8 n.10.

19. Lundström, V. (1927), 262.

20. An equivalent passage which springs to mind is more geographical in nature: the description of Britain in B.G.V 12-14.

21. Eymer, K. (1913), 24-47.

22. c.f. Eymer (n.21 above); Norden, E. (1923), 84ff. and passim; Lundström, V. (1927), passim; Anderson, J.G.C. (1938), introduction xxii; Paratore, E. (1951), 298.

23. Velleius Paterculus Hist.2, 105, 1; 2, 106, 2.

24. Pliny the Elder N.H.IV, xiii, 96-xv, 101.

25. Strabo Geog. VII, 1, 1-5 (289-292)

26. Pomponius Mela Chor. III, 3, 25-32.

27. Tacitus Ann. I, 60.

28. Tacitus Ann. II, 23-24. Compare the Elder Seneca Suas. I, 15 (Pedo's poem on Germanicus at sea)

29. c.f. Anderson, J.G.C. (1938, xix; Syme, R. (1958), I, 126-127; Benario, H.W. (1975), 31.

30. Tacitus Germ.34, 2; 45, 1.

31. Tacitus Germ.16, 1.

32. Tacitus Germ.27, 3.

33. Pliny the Elder, N.H.VII, 76: ipsi non pridem vidimus... in filio Cornelii Taciti equitis Romani Belgicae Galliae rationes procurantis.

34. Unless we accept the view of Paratore, E. (1951), 287ff.

35. Syme, R. (1958), 125.

36. Warmington, E.H. (1970), 120-121.

37. Paratore, E. (1951), 287ff.

38. Tacitus Agr. 3: non tamen pigebit vel incondita ac rudi voce memoriam prioris servitutis ac testimonium praesentium bonorum composuisse.

39. Syme, R. (1958), 128.

40. Paratore, E. (1951), 288.

41. C.f. the account of Britain in Agr.10-13 and Judaea in Hist.V, 1-13.

42. Mattingl y, H. (1948), 14 argues that the Agricola was a preparatory study for the Histories; if so why cannot the Germania fulfill a similar purpose? However, it would seem a disproportionate length to be merely a digression to a longer work.

43. e.g. the summary of Galba's potential at the end of his obituary (Hist.I, 49): capax imperii nisi imperasset, and at numerous points in his work, particularly in closing sententiae.

44. Syme, R. (1970), 9: "he knew and valued the northern barbarians".

45. c.f. Walker, B. (1952), 225.

46. c.f. Calgacus (Agr.29ff.), Arminius (Ann.I and II), Caratacus (Ann.XIII), Valens (Hist.IV) and other examples, mainly in speeches.

47. c.f. Seneca Dial. III, ii, 3 on Germany.

48. Anderson, J.G.C. (1938) Introduction.

49. e.g. Germ. 3; 6; 11; 13; 14; 21; 24; and incidentally in the tribal descriptions.

50. An equivalent example of the stressing of achievement can be seen at Ann.II, 61, when Germanicus in his tour of the East is recorded as reaching rubrum ad mare, viewed as a political reference to Trajan's military achievement of 116 A.D. though shortly afterwards outdated (117 A.D.). Syme, R. (1958) II, 470, 768-770 uses this as dating evidence for the Annals.

The reverse implication is given at Ann.IV, 67 where the description of Capri throws a bad light on Tiberius, instead of, as here, a good impression of Trajan compared to his opponents. So too in the Agricola (e.g. 37), the general has worthy opponents in the Caledonians. Titus at Jerusalem (Hist.V, 1-13) has unworthy opponents, which forces Tacitus to stress the topographical opposition to throw the best light on Titus.

51. Germ.37 entire and Germ.33: maneat, quaeso, duretque gentibus, si non amor nostri, at certe odium sui, quando urgentibus imperii fatis nihil iam praestare fortuna maius potest quam hostium discordiam.

itself incorporating a quotation from Livy V, 22 and 36. See on this the commentary of Sleeman, J.H. (1933), 181; Paratore, E. (1951). 335; Syme, R. (1958), 46 and also at Virgil Aen.II, 653 and Lucan B.C. 10, 30.

52. Paratore, E. (1951), 287ff.

53. Paratore, E. (1951), 288: "cosa che finirebbe per profilare la Germania come un'opera d'occasione".

54. c.f Liebeschuetz, W. (1966), 126-139.

55. The Elbe is of particular significance as the furthest point ever gained by the Romans in Germany, and lost after ashort period:

Germanos numquam satis excusaturos quod inter Albim et Rhenum virgas et securis et togam viderint (Ann. I, 59) post exercitu flumen Albim transcendit, longius penetrata Germania quam quisquam priorum (Ann. IV, 44) (Ahenobarbus) cf. other points in the Annals; also Velleius Paterculus Hist.II, 106, 23. The mention of the Elbe is equivalent to the reference to rubrum ad mare (n.50 above), as a mark of achievement.

56. Syme, R. (1958), 392 speaks of Tacitus's "reluctance to clog the narrative and annoy the reader with a superfetation of details".

57. Tacitus's interest in the exotic is also shown elsewhere: e.g. Hist.IV, 81-84 on the cult of Serapis, or Ann.III, 62-63 onPaphian Venus. Names in them-selves can provide a hint of exoticism.

58. Warmington, E. (1970), 120.

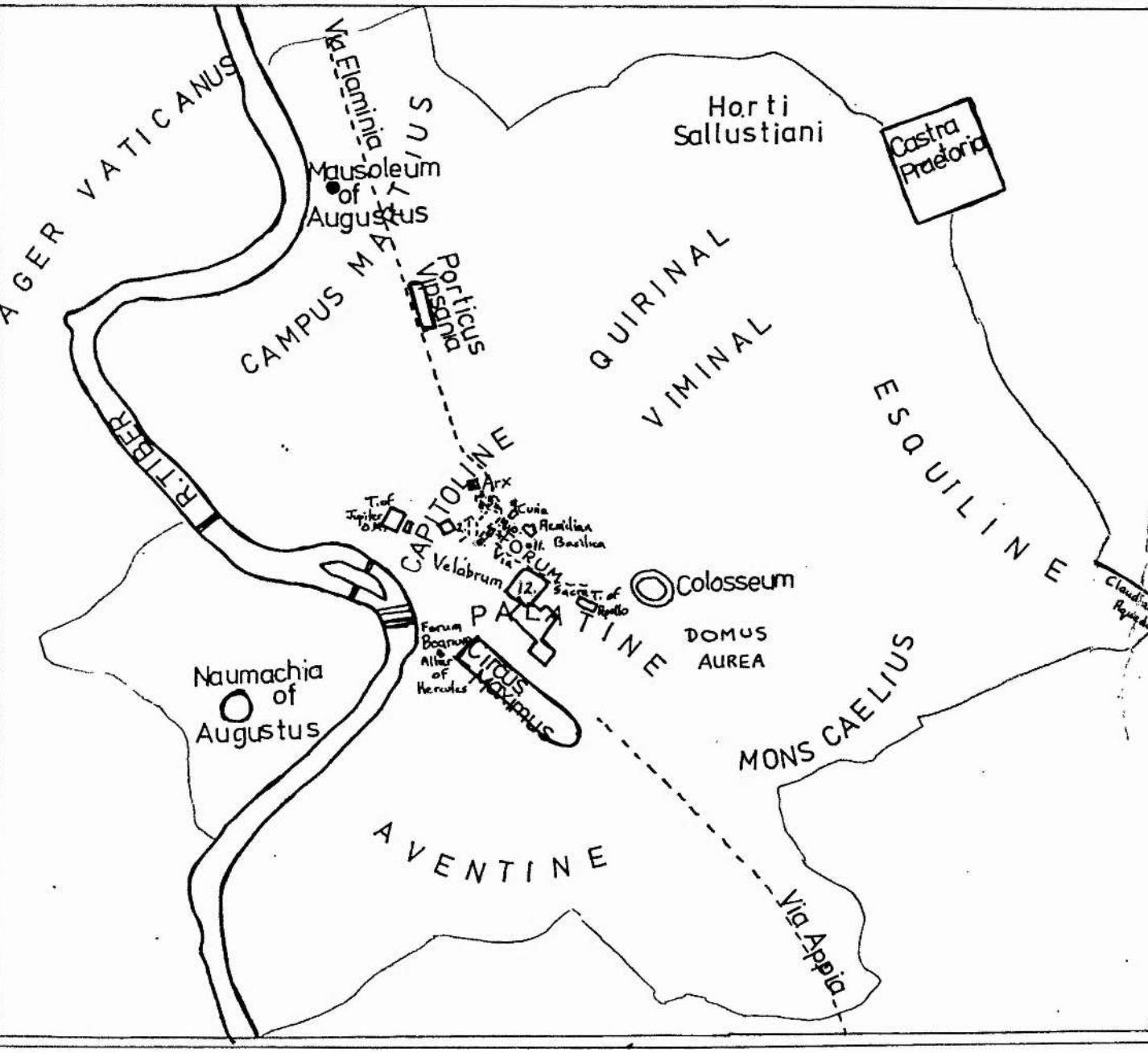
59. It is interesting in this respect to compare the discussion of Hippocrates on the effects of environment on politics and race: Influences of Atmosphere, Water and Situation chapters 16 and 24, quoted in Toynbee, A.J. (1952), 143-146.

60. Compare here Agricola 21 where the Britons afe infiltrated by the debility brought by Roman pleasures, and thus lose their own strength: idque apud imperitos humanitas vocabatur, cum pars servitutis esset.

61. Paratore, E. (1951), 327.

62. Warmington, E. (1970), 121.

63. Norden, E. (1923), 40 n1.



R O M E

1 : 25.000

1. Temple of Juno
2. Clivus Capitolinus
3. Gemonian Steps
4. Temple of Concord
5. Prison
6. Temple of Saturn
7. Golden Milestone
8. Rostra
9. Curia
10. Lacus Curtius
11. Temple of Vesta
12. Domus Tiberiana

Chapter 6

Rome

Though it would not be impossible to compose a work covering a period of Roman history without making some reference to the capital city, such an occurrence would be surprising, considering how much Rome was the hub around which happenings throughout the Empire gathered. Tacitus shows a great awareness of this centralised attitude, as can be seen in his continual practice of alternating between Rome and the provinces; this is found in the *Histories* in terms of block description, and in the *Annals*, where a return to Rome invokes a return to the theme of Imperialism. There are therefore numerous points at which Rome is the area of activity, and thus requires some description, for purposes of clarification. However, as is frequently the case, Tacitus's intentions pass beyond that of intelligibility: his references are meant to make some further point, to provoke some mental association.

Unlike other passages chosen for treatment, the descriptions of Rome occur at diverse and evenly spread points and often apply to quite different contexts. This obviously makes any discussion of Rome as seen through Tacitus's eyes far more complex to undertake, though equally necessary to the proposition as a whole. Nevertheless, there are certain themes which help to provide some unity, and through these it may be possible to formulate some ideas on Tacitus's intentions.

The passages to be considered are taken from the *Histories* and the *Annals*, where events in Rome are directly pictured. The *Germania* and *Agricola*, whose themes centre them elsewhere, do not on the whole refer to Rome itself, except in terms of

sociological comparison, and as it were the dictator of policy; they are thus irrelevant to this discussion. Those passages of relevance in the longer works include the following:

Histories	I, 27-43 (passim)	The murder of Galba.
"	I, 80, 86	Mutiny against Otho; prodigies.
"	II, 88-89, 93	Vitellius in Rome.
"	III, 68-74	The attack on the Capitol.
"	III, 82-85	Flavian-Vitellian supporters fight.
Annals	I, 76, 79	Tiber floods.
"	II, 82	Rome after news of Germanicus's death.
"	III, 9	Piso's arrival in Rome.
"	III, 72	Public building programmes.
"	IV, 64	Fire on Mons Caelius.
"	VI, 45	Fire on Mons Aventinus.
"	XII, 23-24	Claudius's pomerium.
"	XIV, 15	Prodigies.
"	XV, 37-45	Fire at Rome.
"	XV, 58	Rome under threat of Nero.

The passages at Hist.III, 68-74 and Ann. XV, 37-45 are particularly noteworthy; the remainder are often short, serving to portray a single idea or to illustrate the author's normal approach. They emphasise the importance of Rome to the history of the period, provide contrast to external events, and help to retain the annalistic framework.

This method of alternating between Rome and elsewhere finds its precedent in Sallust, in whose Jugurthine War the same practice is seen with the scenes of warfare in North Africa and of politics and reactions in Rome (1), used to retain interest and to provide contrasting episodes.

The question of sources, usually so relevant to any consideration of Tacitus's work, need not concern us here; the audience for which he is writing would require no explanation of the origins, early history and general topography of Rome, so well known that urbs alone is sufficient to identify it (2). Those of his readers who did not themselves inhabit the city would probably have been educated there for part of their lives, and would be accustomed to transacting business or legal affairs in the capital, also joining the social circles of the day. In a society orientated around Rome, it would be difficult to avoid knowing the city well, and most educated Romans would have read Livy's accounts of its foundation and early history (3). It is on these foundations that Tacitus is building: he is not bringing new knowledge before us, but using the basic facts about Rome, its situation and major landmarks to provide a setting in which to portray events to the maximum dramatic and atmospheric effect. He could be accused of lack of detail, but as in his other geographical sections, Tacitus balances the material with care, to clarify the facts without being pedantic. This creates an impressionistic picture which conveys immediacy, and this is particularly true of the two longer passages mentioned above (p138) (4).

A number of separate themes can be identified among the descriptions of Rome listed above. Yet we frequently find that the individual ideas overlap each other within an episode, depending upon the context of the passage and the specific intentions of the author. However, for the purposes of this discussion we shall regard the episodes under three headings:

i) Necessary description for the clarification of events.

ii) Digressive material of antiquarian or religious significance.

iii) Accounts of disasters.

Additionally, we must consider the antithetical substance brought about by the description of Rome: the interlinked themes of the habitual versus the exotic and distant; autocracy versus liberty; virtue-vice and past-present.

i) Description necessary for the clarification of events

The Histories, concerned as they are with the turmoil of the years 69-70 A.D. and the rapid alternation between the four emperors Galba, Otho, Vitellius and Vespasian, are centred upon Rome, as the goal which outwardly proves establishment as Head of State: possession of the capital is equated to dominance over the Empire itself. Galba's accession is in fact marked by the comment:

> evulgato imperii arcano posse principem alibi quam Romae fieri (Hist. I, 4)

a precedent for the future, as Galba was in Spain and not Rome when proclaimed. So Vitellius in Germany and Vespasian in Judaea could assume power, and thus continue the Civil War of these years. Nevertheless, the psychological importance of gaining Rome is not lost by this development. Tacitus alternates between the different areas held by the Imperial contenders, but always returns to Rome, for this is the centre which links the diverse parts of the Empire, and the leader of events. Rome also plays a structural role, by being so central and by figuring so frequently

The first three books of the Histories, describing the "Year of the Four Emperors", shows this alternation. Hist. I, 27ff. deals with the scene of Galba's murder in Rome. Tacitus could not omit this account, which of necessity requires some reference to sites in the city in order to clarify the sequence

of events, so we are able to localise the occurrences. The action is broken up by two speeches: the first is by Piso, representing the Galban party, and the second by Otho himself, reflecting the opposite viewpoint. Surrounding and interrupting these we are given a vivid description of events leading up to the climax in section 41 of Galba's murder. Through these scenes we follow the participants around the area of the Forum and Palatine at the centre of the city, with occasional glimpses across Rome into the castra praetoriana to the north-east (the starting point of Otho's rebellion). The account is given basically as a series of interconnecting scenes, beginning with the picture of Galba on the Palatine sacrificing pro aede Apollinis. This temple was dedicated by Augustus in 28 B.C. (5) to a god who seems to have been considered somewhat 'up-market'. The reference is hence suggestive of not merely piety, but of upper class style religion, and at the same time bears strong overtones of autocratic sentiment: built by the first Emperor, worshipped at by the present ruler and even sited upon the hill long held to be the Imperial home. It is ironical that this is where Otho watches the interpreting of omens which convince him that this is the moment for his own proclamation. From here we visualise Otho's descent past the domus Tiberiana, Tiberius's palace (more suggestion of Imperialism), just above the Forum and on a direct line towards the miliarum aureum or Golden Milestone (6), via the busy velabrum, the area lying between the Forum and the Capitoline Hill. The Milestone, too, was set up by Augustus in the Forum in 20 B.C. and marked the exact centre of the Roman Empire: a fitting place for the proclamation of the Emperor. Dudley notes its use as a rendezvous. Where Otho went from here is not entirely clear, except for the direction-towards the

Praetorian barracks-the centre of military strength. The reason for this is to enhance the confusion and uncertainty, and at the same time it would be difficult to produce significant landmarks, as well as being rather unnecessary. As always in Tacitus, only the bare essentials are present, except in cases where the aim is psychological.

At this point, it might be remarked that of the buildings referred to, most are temples or other religious sites, or Imperial palaces, or else are sites connected with the earliest days of Rome (such as the hills). Thus they are prominent either in position, or in legend and literature, and normally lie around the Forum area. This will become more obvious as the discussion proceeds. Tacitus is not being obscure in his presentation.

This having been said, the next place to which reference is made is the Vipsania porticus (I, 31). These barracks lay in the northern part of the city, in the Campus Martius, but its site is irrelevant here, except to clarify that it is not the Praetorian camp to which Celsus is being sent, but a small obscure pasting place unlikely to make any difference to the situation. So with the Libertatis atrium which may have been sited near the Forum.

From messagers spread throughout Rome, we return to the confused scene at the Palace, and the advice of the Galban party to their leader in section 33:

> non expectandum ut compositis castris forum invadat et prospectante Galba Capitolium adeat

The occupation of the Forum would be serious enough, but if the Capitol were to be taken it would be tantamount to defeat, for this is the site from which the Empire has spread, from the

foundation of Rome: the psychological advantage would mean victory for Otho in the eyes of the Roman people. This theme recurs, as we shall see in Book III. Meanwhile Galba is marooned and ineffective on the Palatine until the false rumour of Otho's death calls him forth for the climax. From I, 39, after Otho's speech to arouse the soldiers, the picture is of Galba high amidst the jostling crowds in the Forum, uncertain which way to turn. It is easy to imagine the scene, as Galba turns around in different directions, looking towards each of the possible refuges, hesitant and indecisive until it is too late to make any move. The language in this section is heightened, helping to create the mental images and the general atmosphere of panic; since this occurs in the most familiar area in the Empire, the picture can come alive. The section (I, 40) immediately preceding Galba's murder is the high point , worth quoting for its linguistic qualities and the inherent contrasts:

> igitur milites Romani, quasi Vologaesum aut Pacorum avito Arsacidarum solio depulsuri ac non imperatorem suum inermem et senem trucidare pergerent, disiecta plebe, proculcato senatu, truces armis, rapidi equis forum inrumpunt. nec illos Capitolii aspectus et imminentium templorum religio et priores et futuri principes terruere quo minus facerent scelus cuius ultor est quisquis successit.

The suggestion is that any Emperor is as autocratic and tyrannical as the Parthian kings of the not too distant past, and the exotic touch bears out the un-Roman nature of the crime, as well as providing a contrast to the scene in the Forum. The murder of Galba is barbarous and unjust; certainly the replacement is unlikely to be an improvement. Galba is weak and at the mercy

of the troops; he bears none of the splendour of an Eastern monarch, but is unarmed and an old man, a shameful target for any attack. The apposition of this three words imperatorem, inermem and senem is striking in its contradiction in terms. trucidare is a strong word, with overtones of great violence in preparation for the ensuing murder, and this is feinforced by truces shortly after(7). Its associations are not pleasant, and the context is made still more clear by disiecta, which again has strong connotations, and proculcato, with its vivid imagery meaning literally 'trampled upon', and more commonly found in poetry than prose. Those who are supposed to be in control are now scattered and brought to heel while the military take over (and in no gentle way either: inrumpunt). In contrast to this we are shown the only other possible resistance: respect for what is sacred. The Emperor, People and Senate are powerless in the face of armed men; so too the ancient Capitol with its temples and long history is totally incapable of preventing the forthcoming violence, and Galba's last hope disappears.

The theme of the Capitol as a site of religious significance is one that recurs. So much of Rome's early history is bound up with this hill (Tarpeia, the Gauls etc.). On the Capitoline stood the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, the most important god in Roman belief and the protector of the Urbs. It is essential here to look at Livy's account of its foundation (8), which stresses the significance of the site with its temple to the well being of the city and of the future Empire. This will become still more importan in the discussion of Book III.

Yet despite this, the murder takes place (I, 41) at Curtii lacum, a marshy spot in the centre of the Forum, and the source of many legends as to its origins, but very much suggest-

ive of valour rather than cowardly murder. Equally unworried by their location are the murderers of Piso at the Temple of Vesta in the Forum, the rounded building on the most sacred ground in Rome (9), which evidently was stong enough to give the killers scruples: they waited until they had dragged Piso to the door before killing him. (I, 43).

Such is the account which Tacitus gives of the death of Galba and the accession of Otho in Rome. After this, attention focuses on the next claimant, Vitellius in Germany, and the meeting between the two forces at Cremona in North Italy. The suicide of Otho completes this conflict, and Vitellius prepares to enter Rome and assume his 'inheritance' (Hist.II, 88-89). There are reminiscences of the earlier account of Galba's murder, such as the flocking to the lacus Curtii, a realistic touch true of any such crowd after any such incident. The picture is again confused but without any of the undercurrents of fear and violence which cannot be restrained. This is particularly notable in II, 93:

sed miles...in perticibus aut delubris et urbe tota vagus

There is no need to specify the locations, and it is indeed more telling without, for the soldiers have no interest in the dedicator of the portico nor in the god of the shrine, nor have they any sense of sacrilege. The ensuing fever brings implied retribution for this disregard, even though explained by the unhealthy nature of the Vatican area (infamibus Vaticani locis). Besides these points there is little of importance to note , except in comparison with what is brought out by the Galba section of the topography and its significance.

Turning now to Book III of the Histories, the context of the episodes 68-74 and 82-85 is the climax of the Civil Wars

before order is restored under the Flavian dynasty. The decisive battle had already taken place at Cremona, but Vitellius had not yet surrendered himself and Rome to Vespasian's brother, Flavius Sabinus, and the outcome was fighting in Rome itself between the rival factions. Ironically, the fighting did not begin until Vitellius attempted to abdicate, renouncing all Imperial power. This provoked a mass reaction from the people, leaving Vitellius no choice but to go along with them, though he has already accepted the futility of his cause, and knows that only Rome still supports him. He has lost his only chance of survival through the enthusiasm of the Roman people, and now his fate is sealed.

At the beginning of section 68 we see the humbled Vitellius leaving the Palace and all this signifies to travel through the city, amongst the ordinary people whom he is now joining in rank. This was a serious, indeed, unprecedented step, and we respect Vitellius for taking it, having as yet no hint of how matters will turn out. After his speech to the people, he intends to complete his abdication at the aedes Concordiae, at the north-west end of the Forum, below the Capitol, dedicated by Tiberius (10). The name in itself is ironic, that Vitellius' presence at the shrine of Concord should cause hostility. We are told that the people blocked off all exits but the Sacred Way (Via Sacra) back through the Forum to the Palatine, and being forced to take this route signified the resumption of Imperial power, whether or not the bearer was willing.

The first actual fighting was at the lacum Fundani (III, 69), somewhere in the Quirinal district, and hence near the house of Sabinus and the Praetorian barracks; from this, Sabinus fled followed by Domitian and the Flavian party to the Capitol, traditionally the citadel of the city. For the rest of this extract,

the Capitol is the focus of attention. However, the attack is delayed by the report of Sabinus's envoy, Martialis, speaking to Vitellius. His speech incorporates several references to the topography of Rome, but this time serving a rhetorical purpose, as often in Tacitus (11):

> cur enim e rostris fratris domum, imminentem foro et inritandis hominum oculis, quam Aventinum et penatis uxoris petisset?...contra Vitellius in Palatium, in ipsam imperii arcem regressum....stratam innocentium caedibus celeberrimam urbis partem, ne Capitolio quidem abstineri (Hist. III, 70)

This strengthens the ideas implicit in the factual accounts preceding: the Palatine as symbol of Imperialism, the Capitol as sacred and ancient (12), the last site to desecrate, and the centrality and importance of the Forum area. The rostra was the place of persuasion, yet Vitellius's speech there brought the opposite result. The use of imminentem must surely be intended to strike the reader with further implications of threat, and Tacitus uses the same word elsewhere for this effect (13). The Aventine is a harmless district, unlike the Palatine and Forum. The remainder of Martialis's speech contrasts events in the provinces to occurrences in Rome: Rome is the final stronghold of Vitellius while the entire Empire now supports Vespasian. Vitellius knows all this already, but is helpless, so the rhetoric is wasted, except for its literary effect, and the delayal of the climax.

Sections 71-74 cover in great detail the siege of the Capitol and the ensuing fire and destruction of the Temple of Jupiter O.M., broken up by a relevant digression on the Capitol and this temple, along with their history, which shall be consid-

ered later. Tacitus does not merely give a vivid description of the action but also fills in much detail on the specific area and buildings involved, perhaps more so than at any other point in his works. This shows the importance he places on this event and the need for complete understanding of where the action is taking place to explain each occurrence. There are constant echoes of Livy, implicit and explicit references to Porsenna and the Gauls, and not only in the digressive section. But now the enemy is no outsider, but in fact the inhabitants of the city whom the Capitol is menat to protect.

Now the Vitellians rush up the clivus Capitolinus from the Forum, while the defenders hurl any available objects upon them from the rooftops of the nearby buildings, answered by torches from the attackers; reaching the gate they were held back not by the doors, but by Sabinus's hasty barricade of statues, of all things, almost as if marking the end of an era, as both sides contribute to the despoliation of the ancient Capitol. The Vitellians give up this approach and attack at two other points: the Asylum and the Tarpeian rock, each recalling legend and Livy. The attack came also from buildings adjacent to the Capitol, which were no risk in peace time. So a fire is started; Tacitus lays the blame equally upon the two factions for this deed, which seems to mark tragedy for the Empire as a whole, rather than the other disasters which he portrays so graphically elsewhere, which are on a more personal level. The significance of the burning of the Capitol is noted by Dudley (14) as being Empire-wide, as can be ssen in Hist.IV, 54:

> sed nihil aeque quam incendium Capitolii, ut finem imperio adesse crederent, impulerat

this view again stemming from the legendary importance of the

site (15). It is during the digression that the most heightened language occurs, at the moment at which the temple is burning, and following Tacitus's epitaph:

> sic Capitolium clausis foribus indefensum et indireptum conflagravit (Hist. III, 71)

The final two sections of this extract describe the taking of the Capitol amidst the panic caused by the fire. Tacitus avoids specific mention of any places to show the confusion, as we have already seen elsewhere, and the uncertainty of the participants. The only reference is to the hiding place of Domitian amongst the temple buildings, and the future construction of a new temple here to mark his rescue (16). There may also be some intention to call the reader's attention to Domitian's reconstruction of the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, which was the huilding remaining on the site through Tacitus's day until long after (17).

The murder of Sabinus was reluctantly agreed by Vitellius, and the Flavian's body was left at the Gemonias, the steps to the east of the Capitol leading down to the prison, and a place used for the exposure of criminals' bodies (and now for that of the Emperor's brother).

The restoration of the Capitol is covered in Hist.IV, 53, a calm picture of the sacred ceremonial involved. This is placed here in chronological order, but after the death of Vitellius and amidst the return to the events of the German revolt which accupy most of Books IV and V. No mention is made of the short existence of Vespasian's temple, burnt down again at the start of Titus's short and ill-omened reign. This passage is meant as light relief in its context.

The aftermath of the destruction of the Capitol is

portrayed in Hist.III, 82-85. The Flavian entry into Rome was by three routes: the via Flaminia (direct route from the north), by the Tiber and along the via Salaria (entering Rome from beside the Praetorian camp, a likely trouble spot). The references to the horti Sallustiani and the campus Martius follow logically upon these routes. Both are large well known areas, needing no explanation other than the angusta et lubrica viarum at the former. No further detail is required. Tacitus's description of the fighting within the city is horrifically graphic (compare the Great Fire of Rome in the Annals) with the vocabulary deliberately chosen for maximum effect. Almost every word in section 83 has connotations of violence, mindless cruelty or death: iugulari, sanguinem, proelia et vulnera, cruor et strues corporum, inhumana securitas, and intermingled vice which removes any last traces of the glory of war. The epigrammatic saeva ac deformis urbe tota facies sums up the situation, but Tacitus insists on taking the scene still further, particularly by the juxtaposition of ideas and the use of alliteration, as in iuxta scorta et scortis similes, which immediately follows cruor et strues (18). The reaction of the reader to this picture is almost physical sickness. No account of battles in foreign parts could have the same effect as this close of the civil wars in the capital, for here no faction is in the right. All this effect is achieved without any detailed location, until the siege of the Praetorian camp in section 84, where we are reminded of the significance of the Capitol to Rome, for the soldier, his camp means much the same, and its protection is equally a sacred duty:

> proprium esse militis decus in castris: illam patriam, illos penatis

There are frequent overtones of religion in this section, in a

context of bloodshed, symbolic of a form of propitiation.

The third image we are given, after the two scenes of fighting in the urban and military areas of the city, turns to the palace area to show a forlorn and abandoned Vitellius, a pitiable figure. Despite all the fighting over this man, he has been totally ignored and forgotten until the time comes for his execution. This is tinged with memories of the past year's conflict: the Forum holds the rostra, where his predecessor Otho took power, and where he himself attempted to relinquish that power, the spot of Galba's death, and now that of Vitellius himself, killed at the Gemonian steps where Sabinus's body had lain, a reminder that but for the failure of his abdication attempt, Vitellius might have survived. So Vespasian has won, but the victory has not been glorious.

Turning now to the Annals, we find that little action takes place in Rome apart from senatorial proceedings, which are usually concerned with individuals, and with domestic and foreign policy. Rome is symbolic of the Emperor and his control of the state (even when Tiberius has exiled himself to Capri). The city itself has very little part to play except on the occasions when disaster strikes; other references are brief and relatively unimportant. For example, the comment at Ann.II, 82 merely serves to emphasise the distance of the Empire's bounds from the small yet influential centre of Rome; Ann.III, 9 deals with the return of Piso after the death of Germanicus, and the tactlessness of his landing beside the mausoleum of Augustus, where Germanicus's ashes were placed. It is this, following the exaggerated rumours from the East, which turns the people's anger on Piso, and begins the build up to his suicide. Ann.XIV,

15 has a different purpose again, to stress the debauchery which Imperialism has provoked (hence the reference to Augustus's navali stagno as the location of the vice encouraged by Nero, amidst the description of the heights of shame now reached by the latest in this line of rulers; of course, nothing like this wiuld have occurfed in the days of the Republic, when morality still counted for something (19).

Finally, Annals XV, 58 gives an impressionistic view of the city put under guard by Nero in his fear after the discovery of Piso's plot against him. The picture is generalised rather than specific.

ii) Digressive material of antiquarian or religious significance

As has already been explained, there is necessarily a certain amount of overlap between these three categories. Thus the first passage to which we turn is Histories III, 72, the account of the Capitoline temple. We have already discussed the context of this passage, and the digression marks the great significance of the disaster. Tacitus delays the action at this point, one of the most active and dramatic moments in his work, to force us to realise the enormity of this. In this case it is not just Tacitus satisfying his taste for antiquarianism-if that can ever be considered as true-but because it is such an important event:

> id facinus post conditam urbem luctuosissimum foedissimumque rei publicae populi Romani accidit

leaves no doubt that Tacitus seriously considers it to be so. The audacity of the deed is remarkable (palam), especially considering the antiquity of the site, as distant as the first

kings; the two Tarquins and Servius Tullius sanctified and dedicated the place (Livy I, 55 and 56), and it is only in civil war that it suffers, not only now in 69 A.D., but also in the conflict between Marius and Sulla in 83 B.C. Even the two most close-fought invasions: those of Porsenna the Etruscan (20) and of the Gallic hordes (21) early in the history of Rome had not committed this sacrilege now carried out by the Romans themselves. The rhetoric emphasises the outrageousness and futility of the deed. The temple began in glory, was dedicated by Horatius in 507 B.C. (22), having been built from the spoils of Roman victory. The later history of the temple on the site has already been mentioned. Livy is being deliberately echoed to evoke the sentiment of antiquity through familiar tales from the earlier historian.

It is the public buildings which are bound to be the most familiar landmarks in the city, and especially the temples; thus, large scale building programmes were intended to bring renown upon oneself or one's family. In this the Emperors were no exception. Ann. III, 72 shows Tiberius's generosity in the matter of the basilicam Pauli, Aemilia monimenta, when this old Republican family wished to restore the building. Lepidus is, ironically, pecuniae modicus, despite his noble ancestry, yet is still willing to pay for the work done, and must ask the Emperor's generous permission to undertake the job on his own family's monument, at his own expense, during the trend of publica munificentia. The basilica is another of the ancient Forum buildings.

The rebuilding of the Theatre of Pompey was carried out at the expense of Tiberius, but we are not allowed to appreciate this after the earlier account of Lepidus. Tacitus is by no means criticising the beautification of Rome; only the fact

that the freedom and resources to do so are no longer available, and that not even this can be done without consulting the Emperor. Tiberius is in control of everything, whether historical, religious or domestic.

A better example of Tacitus's digressive practice occurs at Ann.IV, 64 amidst the disasters of the year 27 A.D. This passage overlaps a number of other themes, notably the episode on Capri (see Chapter 1) and the elements of disaster. Until this fire the Mons Caelius was thickly populated, but from this date it acquired a reputation for being a wealthy, upper class area. However, this passage is best discussed later.

Passing on to Claudius's reign, we reach the account of the extending of the pomerium or city boundary (Ann. XII, 23-24). In fact we are told nothing about the new boundary which destroys this relic of the past eras of the Republic, and are given a careful description of the old line. This may have its source in some earlier author such as Livy, but this cannot be substantiated. The pomerium was a civil and religious limit, through which no army could pass. The new boundary would be known to most of his readers and is mentioned here for the purpose of tying in with tradition and events, as Claudius felt justified in following the custom that those who expand the Empire may also expand the capital. Yet we have not heard much about Claudius and his foreign policy, and the invasion of Britain is yet to come.

The ancient pomerium dated from the origins of Rome, and bore much religious significance. The aspects of antiquity are strengthened by the restraint in vocabulary and by the names used to identify the route: the Forum, altar of Hercules, Palatine, Curia, all reminiscent of the simple origins and religious

sensibility of early Rome, lost with the Imperial age, with Claudius now destroying one of the last remnants.

Tacitus did not have to explain this all so fully; he could simply have mentioned that Claudius altered the pomerium. This in itself is proof that he wishes to make a further point on this matter, and that it is not just an excursus for its own sake.

Tacitus is interested in antiquarian topics for their relation to current affairs, in comparing the ancient way of life, the things which constituted and enhanced the Republic, with the dissolution of the State through autocratic rule. The ideas of prisca virtus and pietas are the hallmarks of all that is good, and rarely found amongst the vice and servitude of modern life. This is why he places so much emphasis on the role of such places as the Capitol and the ancient temples and on the early history of Rome.

iii) Accounts of disasters.

Clearly Rome was a dangerous place in which to live, in terms of natural catastrophe and accidents as well as of political and social life. The whole of Juvenal's third Satire makes this plain. Tacitus's catalogue of disasters seems never ending, and even taking his own pessimistic attitude into account, it cannot be denied that the frequency of such occurrences seems to prove Rome a fated city. Obviously much of this is the result of the situation and method of construction of the city, along with all too few precautions against the likelihood of both fire and flood. In all probability Tacitus has omitted all but the really serious incidents. Fire in particular must

have been a common hazard in ancient Rome. Tacitus concentrates far more on such episodes in the Annals than in the Histories (if we exclude the burning of the Capitol in Hist. III, a deliberate rather than unfortunate occurrence), perhaps because of this idea that the capital represents its head and ruler: what happens in Rome can be blamed directly upon the current Emperor, with even a natural disaster bearing the suggestion of divine anger or portent (23).

Flooding in Rome was a problem which must only have developed as the city outgrew the original seven hills and was forced to extend into the plains flanking the Tiber; the Forum itself was once marshy and prone to flooding until the drainage system including the cloaca maxima cleared the area for public use (24). However, at certain periods the Tiber still rose above its banks and caused problems. Tacitus gives us two accounts of such disasters: Histories I, 80 and 86; Annals I, 76 and 79. In meither does he deal with the matter in great detail. The former is introduced by the idea of mass panic in Rome in the context of Galba's murder, and the more recent news of Vitellius's claim to the Principate, along with revolt in Germany. The chaos in Rome is increased by the number of portents appearing at this time, all closely connected with places significant for their antiquity, nobility, or unquestionable link with ancient Rome and the Republic: hence the Capitol, the shrine of Juno, the island in the Tiber, and Etruria, so nearly bound up with the origins of the city. Non of these augurs well, but Tacitus stresses that the worst omen is still to be recorded, holding the reader in suspense:

> sed praecipuus et cum praesenti exitio etiam futuri pavor subita

by delaying thus far the words inundatione Tiberis. The effects of this disaster were far reaching, both in immediate loss of life and in delayed catastrophes: famine, unemployment, and slow destruction of buildings, particularly the notorious insulae (25). As with other passages we have considered, Tacitus is using the language as far as possible to create the atmosphere of doom and impending disaster from all sides. The impression we retain is similar to that in Histories III, 82ff. (p150 above). The accumulation of words like metu, exitio, proruto, casuum, corrupta etc. are essential for creating this impression, and it is no surprise after all this to find Tacitus ending this section (following a report of the closure of the Campus Martius route which led to attack and defence) by the comment:

> a fortuitis vel naturalibus causis in prodigium et omen imminentium cladium vertebatur

Yet he has spent much effort in creating a picture which rules out the element of natural catastrophe. The main point of all this is to lead up to the final events of Otho's reign, disastrous from the start and worsening, leading ultimately to his suicide. The fact of the flood is only a part of the overall disaster of the year 69-70, and only portrayed for its bearing upon the period as a whole.

The other flood recorded (Ann. I, 76+79) is in a passage which has an entirely different tone. Tacitus is not here attempting to draw the reader's sympathy, but is treating the occurrence in rather a matter-of-fact way. The reference is brief and is really only mentioned as part of the Senatorial proceedings of the year (15 A.D.), which is part of Tacitus's method of throwing light upon Tiberius as Emperor. The second section shows how attempts to prevent further flooding were

thwarted by the self interest of smaller communities, throwing in religious objections for good measure. The result was a total failure to make any improvements to the course of the Tiber, and fits in with the dispassionate way in which the flood was described. Perhaps Tacitus is deliberately cynical here: to the Emperor and Senate who were scarcely affected by the floods, the matter is hardly worth a mention in the Senate house, and certainly does not draw any emotional response or pity from them. If so, Tacitus has successfully mirrored this attitude by his method of recording the incident. It certainly does not show up Tiberius well. We may be meant to make the contrast with Germanicus after the scenes at the site of the Varian disaster in section 61, who, with us, feels pity and horror for what has happened (pl30 above).

The descriptions of fires destroying Rome are a little different in that the cause is less easy to define. Arson is a simple charge to level, as Nero found to his cost, and whether or not a fire was deliberately started, or the result of an accident can never be certain. There are three accounts of fires in the Annals (at IV, 64; VI, 45; and XV, 37ff.). The first two are played down in order to produce a cumulative yet highly dramatic and atmospheric piece of writing in the third (the 'Great Fire of Rome').

27 A.D., the year of the fire described at Ann.IV, 64, was, it seems, calamitous. First 5o,ooo people were killed on the collapse of the amphitheatre at Fidenae, then this fire broke out on the Mons Caelius. The idea of natural disaster being a portent recurs:

> feralemque annum ferebant et ominibus adversis susceptum principi consilium absentiae, qui mos vulgo, fort-

uita ad culpam trahentes

Thus this leads directly into the description of Tiberius's retiral to Capri, the purpose of which we have seen in Chapterl, and many of the same intentions in the context apply here also. So the Emperor receives the blame, and Tacitus in this fashion undercuts his own report of Tiberius giving financial aid to those who had lost property. We are told nothing of the fire or its effect other than the merest outline. However, it allows Tacitus to branch off into another excursus, on the history of the Caelian Hill. This may be intended to contrast with what the area became: a residential area of the best kind for the wealthy and upper class. The tone is lightened, so that the turn back to prosecutions in section 66 is more emphatic, just as Tiberius's depraved behaviour on Capri ruins its idyllic nature by disarming the reader and producing the unexpected contrast.

Annals VI, 45 also covers the reign of Tiberius, but now a decade later. This time the fire destroys the Aventine Hill, to the south-west side of Rome, and parts of the circus maximus which lay between the Aventine and the Palatine, and the origins of which went back to the period of the kings. As in the previous episode, Tacitus undercuts Tiberius's generosity, this time by a reference to the rarity of his building programmes. Again the fire is simply mentioned, without elaboration. This marks the end of Tiberius's reign apart from the actual death scenes which follow. The context of this passage is rather disorientated, following an account of the uncertain events in the East (the threat of Rome's traditional emeny Parthia), and prior to the accession of Caligula, with all this would imply to a later reader, but as yet an unknown quantity. However, it does not augur well for another Julio-Claudian to be in control, espec-

ially one of Tiberius's choice. Tacitus intentionally places little emphasis on this fire, since other events are of more significance at this time, and in order not to detract from the effect of the description of the fire in Nero's reign; however, it cannot be passed over as another opportunity to hit out at Tiberius can be gained by it.

The Great Fire of Rome, on the other hand is one of the fullest, most graphic, emotive and living descriptions ever given by Tacitus. It is a masterpiece of evocative power, realism and atmosphere from an author who specialises in such effects. No-one can deny the drama of this episode, nor its importance. Dudley (26) makes the comparison with the Greek historian Thucydides' description of the plague at Athens which led to its final collapse into 'moral anarchy', a reverse of the situation at the time of this fire.

The context is of vital importance to the events described and to their effect upon the reader. Nero has achieved the ultimate degradation firstly by his tour of Greece to display his artistic and to his mind unquestionable talents to that province, the very seat of all art, before proceeding elsewhere; and secondly the further shame of his 'marriage' to the homosexual Pythagoras, complete with all the trimmings. What kind of Emperor can bring such shame upon his subjects? Such corruption was widespread in Rome, and after Tacitus has made this clear, he turns to the fire at Rome as if to imply that the conflagration was a direct consequence of the vice to be found everwhere. The description of the fire follows, along with its aftermath (rebuilding, the <u>domus aurea</u> and the persecution of the Christians), and an account of other disastrous happenings: the revolt of gladiators at Praeneste and ill-omened portents. This

is all leading up to the death of Nero and the civil wars which ensued, beginning with the plot against Nero in Book XVI, and the fire is one of the major events in the rapid descent towards the horrors to come, so that while of immense importance in itself, it also plays a large part in the cumulative effect of the occurrences of this period.

As often, Tacitus is striving to give an atmospheric impression of the situation, and therefore we are given few details of location during the account. This would detract from the effect of confused panic by becoming too specific, and would interrupt the dramatic continuity.

The account breaks down into three basic sections:
1) The first concerns the fire itself and the picture of the city immediately afterwzrds. It is introduced by the remark sequitur clades, and immediately hints strongly at Nero's involvement (forte an dolo principis), before we even know what this tragic occurrence is. The fire began in the circus close to the Palatine and the Mons Caelius, i.e. from the popular place of entertainment where it lay closest to the high class districts. The layout of the city encouraged the spread of the fire, with no munimenta to obstruct its progress, (the noun being intended to recall military siege?):

> antiit remedia velocitate mali et obnoxia urbe artis itineribus hucque et illuc flexis atque enormibus vicis, qualis vetus Roma fuit (Ann. XV, 38)

Throughout the pace is rapid, leaving no breathing space as the words fall over one another, just as the fire rages on without a moment's respite. From the fire, Tacitus turns to the reaction of those suffering from it, and their attempts to avoid the furnace, which seems to have a mind of its own, scheming against

the honest citizens of Rome. The pace, the vocabulary and the style all contribute. Even when the danger seems to have been evaded, yet again it springs up when least expected. Suddenly, after this very full section, attention is turned to the Emperor, the representative of his people who recently promised never to desert them (sect. 36), yet remains at Antium until the fire posed a threat to his own house on the Palatine, destroying the whole hill in time. Only then does Nero make any move to aid hispeople. He provides accommodation and food, and eventually initiates a programme of new building. All these measures would appear creditable but for his initial delay and the constructing of the domus aurea, which Tacitus uses to counter Nero's good acts. Likewise the rumour of Nero's singing of Troy, and the hint of deliberate arson stemming from the Emperor have the same effect.

we only realise the magnitude of the disaster when it is noted that on the sixth day the fire seemed to have been extinguished, mainly as a result of deliberate destruction in its path. But still the fire kindled itself anew (note the graphic word grassatus (27)) in Tigellinus's estates, giving more credibility to the arson theory, and this time attacking not so much the people as the places held sacrosanct by the citizens: the shrines of the gods and the places of pleasure (delubra deum et porticus amoenitatis XV, 40).

2) The toll of destruction is seen in section 40 in the context of the belief that Nero was intending to found a New Rome at the expense of the ancient city. A start has been made by the levelling of many areas, leaving little of the original glory of Rome. As elsewhere, this section contains elements of antiquity and religious feeling. These are mainly brought out by references

to places and the people attached by name or repute to these spots: Evander, Numa, Romulus. The loss is irreplaceable, despite the nobility of the new city:

quamvis in tanta resurgentis urbis pulchritudine multa seniores meminerint quae reparari nequibant (XV, 41)

As in Histories III, the comparison is made with the Gallic invasions:

quo Senones captam urbem inflammaverint

a disaster of equal significance to the history of Rome, and a theme to be recalled later (sect. 43): Gallica incendia. From the days of the Republic we return to the personal and selfish extravagance of Nero who profits from the disaster by taking over large areas of the city for his own use as an enclosed palace area containing the Golden House for which no expense was spared; this act minimises any provision he has made for the homeless and bereft. In the Republic all was simple and utilitarian, but now Nero has reached the opposite extreme. The brief reference to the Attempted Avernus canal adds to the emphasis upon Nero's false priorities and impracticability, and the bitterness felt by those who saw this:

in illa inbisa et spoliis civium extructa domo (XV, 52)

reflects the general feeling. The domus aurea with its arva, stagna, silvae and aperta spatia (in an already overcrowded city) were resented, as Tacitus makes clear by his description in section 42. But ceterum urbis quae domui superant appear to have been well and sensibly planned and constructed, with enforced protective measures in building materials, location and so forth, in addition to religious consultation.

3) The latter leads directly onto the third theme: that of attaching the balsm on others than the Emperor. The Christiani

at least would not fight back, whatever Tacitus and his contemporaries thought of them (29). Tacitus does not sympathise with them, but certainly does not consider them as arsonists; they are Nero's scapegoats. The sites chosen for the cruel murder of the innocents are pleasant places (hortos of Nero) and locations for entertainment (circense). Tacitus's personal view remains rather ambiguous here. Both Nero and the Christians are criticised by him in these sections. The end of section 44 makes his attitude remain obscure, by its impersonal method of comment.

So the fire is over, and all the selfishness and cruelty which it provoked. But none of this could be forgotten: the evidence was all around in the new buildings, the palace of Nero, the continued suspicion and persecution of the Christians; the face of Rome was forever altered from its noble origins and ancient past. Nero's reign has much to answer for, whether or not the Emperor was to blame.

The methods which Tacitus uses to portray Rome vary considerably according to the context and the desired effect in each of the many cases. Rome plays an important part in the events of the Histories and Annals, and can often be considered as a symbol: of Republicanism or Imperialism for example. The various themes tend to intermingle, as we have seen, as in the juxtaposition of contemporary history and antiquarianism, or the exotic and distant and the domestic. Frequently the intention is to create a living picture, a scene before our eyes, not just on paper, which springs out from the words yet through the words. Rome, regardless of her faults, is still the centre of the Empire bearing the insignia of the Republic in her buildings

and indeed in her topography, the very roots of Rome. It is to her that the world looks, and any occurrence here affects the Empire as a whole. Whether Tacitus's portrayal is factual and matter-of-fact, or whether it plays upon psychological reaction to the atmosphere pervading the text, is judged entirely from the context and the overall purpose and direction. Thus the picture given of Rome is alive and realistic. After all, the author himself lived in Rome some few decades after the events described, in the new Rome of Nero's creation, and what better source could we have for first century Rome than an inhabitant who undoubtably has great power in graphic presentation of reality and history combined?

Notes to Chapter 6

1. Sallust Jugurtha e.g. LXXXIV, Marius preparing for the Numidian War in Rome, Senate, Public Assembly; LXXXVI Scene changes to Africa; LXXXVIII Metellus returns to Rome, Marius in Africa. Note also the phrase domi militiaeque in Tacitus and others to show this contrast.
2. e.g. Ann. XV, 38-43 passim, Hist.I, 6 etc.
3. Livy Books 1-10.
4. Walker, B. (1952), 190, 193: "His tableaux may be compared to bas-relief rather than to painting, for form is stressed, ...amd form is movement....This tendency is present in the landscapes also."
5. Temple of Apollo: c.f. Suetonius Aug. 29; Augustus R.G. 19; Dio Cassius LIII, 13; Amm. Marc. XXIII, 33.
6. Dudley, D.R. (1967), 81-83.
7. A word with emotional and violent overtones whose first known example is found at Sallust Cat. 58, 21 trucidemini.
8. Livy, 1, 55-56.
9. Dudley, D.R. (1967), 109. Note in this passage too the reference to Julius Caesar in Hist.I, 42. Is this meant as a deliberate echo of Caesar's murder as Titus Vinius is killed?
10. Suet. Tib.20.
11. e.g. in speeches such as that of Calgacus Agr.30-32; Civilis Hist. V, 26 or atmospheric passages like Ann.I, 61 (Varian disaster.)
12. Livy 5, 40 The citadel is the "home of Rome's tutelary gods".
13. in inentium appears especially in contexts of religion. c.f. Hist. I, 40; III, 71; Ann. III, 9; XV, 69 etc.

14. Dudley, D.R. (1967), 53-54.

15. Livy, 1, 55.

16. Suet. Domit.5

17. Amm. Marc. XXII, 16, 12 (363 A.D.):
post Capitolium, quo se venerabilis Roma in aeternum attollit

18. On the unpleasant alliterative use of the letter s see Wilkinson, L.P. (1963), 9 and 13.

19. c.f. Tacitus Germ. on this theme.

20. Livy 2

21. Livy 5.

22. Livy, 2, 8, 6.

23. This need not reflect Tacitus's own attitude to divine power but rather the attitude prevalent amongst his contemporaries and an element of his fatalistic thinking in the way that disasters are an unavoidable part of the impending doom of the Roman Empire.

24. Livy, 1, 56.

25. Juvenal Sat.III, esp. 193-202.

26. Dudley, D.R. (1968), 161 (Thucyd. II, 47-54); also the following pages (161-167) covering the fire.

27. The frequentative grassatus implies some kind of underhand movement, often suggesting some form of attack. Tacitus uses this word on a number of occasions (e.g. Hist. III,39; Ann.IV, 66; XV, 60), and particularly in the abstract sense. In this case, its use helps to describe the unpredictable smouldering behaviour of the fire.

28. Note the striking juxtaposition of the archaic delubra, which bears all the weight of ancient religion, and of amoenitas, symbolic of life in Imperial times (c.f. Tiberius in Chapter 1).

29. c.f. Pliny Epp.X, 96 and 97 (correspondence with Trajan).

Chapter 7

Geography in the Historiographical Tradition

Greece

No account of Tacitus's treatment of geographical detail can be complete without some consideration of the historiographical framework upon which he was building. Through a comparison with the major surviving historians of the Ancient World, we can see to what extent Tacitus's methods were traditional or innovatory, and what stress was placed upon convention. This survey will consider three Greek historians: Herodotus, Thucydides and Polybius, and four Roman authors: Cato, Sallust, Caesar and Livy. Additionally, there will be a short note on the fourth century historian Ammianus Marcellinus, and how he has pursued the traditions of his predecessors. To conclude, there follows a gazeteer of the main geographical passages in each of these historians, tabulated a) by author and b) by area, showing the proportion of geographical content in the work of each.

The beginnings of historiography have been assigned to Herodotus of Halicarnassus (1) (fl. mid 5th Century B.C.), whose Histories or 'Inquiries' show great influence from the school of Ionian composition (2). This school encouraged writings composed of collections of facts under a single theme, particularly in the geographical field (c.f. Hecataeus of Miletus). However, Herodotus transcends these limitations in introducing a new element: that of analysis, considering the causes behind the facts and making judgements from these. Nevertheless, the Ionian influence remains, and thus a large amount of geographical material is found, often in the form of lengthy digressions,

such as Book II in its entirety, covering the large subject of Egypt: the land, its peoples and customs. This is in preparation for the account of Cambyses' invasion, and necessary as well as interesting information for his Greek audience. The subject matter of the Histories forces the author to include this kind of detail, for his all-important theme is the conflict between the Greek world and the extensive Persian empire. Although knowledge of Greece can be assumed, Persia is a large, distant and alien region, and as a result, Herodotus had to spend a large proportion of his work (Books I-V) in preparation for the description of the Persian Wars which follows. These books involve not only geography but also history, origins, customs and the context of the events in question. This was to become a convention in historiography which continued for many centuries, including and beyond Tacitus himself. The ever-curious Herodotus had an interest in such material for its own sake, and perhaps allows it to occupy an unnecessarily large part of his text. The result is a less fluent narrative, constantly broken up by irrelevant facts and anecdotes, though this may equally be the result of writing in sections suited to public reading. Although the context is logical, as with the above-mentioned example of Egypt, or the descriptions of varied length of areas passed through on the march from Persia to Greece (e.g. the Black Sea regions in Book IV), it seems at times as if Herodotus has unwittingly digressed from his point as something relatively unimportant attracts his attention. The theme of causation may have influenced his presentation of geography, for in order to explain the reason why events occurred, a great deal of background and understanding of foreign peoples and places is invaluable.

However, as the Persian Wars are described (Books VI-

IX), Herodotus takes a different approach, by integrating the essential geographical aspects within his historical narrative, rather than confining them to set blocks of description. This is closer to the approach which we would expect in an historian, and its furthest development in Herodotus is seen in the description of Thermopylae. The loss of this pass to the Persian invaders was crucial to the course of events, but the main reason for its importance was topographical, as Herodotus realises. The omission of topographical details would make the event incomprehensible.

Other factors to be taken into account here are the familiarity of Greece to the reader, and the ease of finding the geographical information required.. Herodotus was recounting events of the generation prior to his own, so that he could have conferred with participants in the wars. Perhaps Thermopylae requires more detail than the battles which occurred at Marathon (Book VI) or Salamis (Book VIII), since these sites were closer to Athens.

So it is evident that Herodotus made discriminating use of his geographical knowledge and interest, by employing it to the full where the context dealt with lesser known or distant regions, yet refusing to add details which would be general knowledge, unless the facts required more information to make sense, as in the case of Thermopylae with its paths through the mountains by which the defenders of the pass were taken in the rear. He frequently indulges his own interest with little sense of proportion, and his chief aims are to entertain, teach, and make comprehensible accounts through relevant geographical description. Any implicit contrast is between the Persians and the Greeks, and there is no attempt to place topographical material in a

deliberately striking context to further any other points. Herodotus would seem to be in the odd position of being uncertain whether he is a geographer or an historian, and the answer would perhaps be that in the early books he is a geographer, and in the later, he truly develops his capacity as an historian.

Herodotus's successor, Thucydides the Athenian, dealt with contemporary history, in which he too had taken part: the Peloponnesian War of 431 B.C. which was to occupy the following decade. He precedes this account by a summary of events from the close of Herodotus's work until the outbreak of war, describing the Greek world of the fifth century and the reasons for Athenian imperialism arising after the Persian Wars. This occupies the first book of the history. Thucydides' view of historiography differs in many respects from that of Herodotus. He tends to keep closer to the theme (the conflict between the Peloponnese and Athenian Leagues), and is less prone to digress. He assumes a knowledge of Greece, despite his intention that his writings should be a 'possession for all time', and therefore gives little geographical detail, deeming this to be an unnecessary waste of space. The annalistic method of structuring his history is logical since the events covered are restricted to a single geographical area and a single overall subject. In originating this method, which was to become a convention, Thucydides was to create problems for his successors, who were concerned with a far wider sphere of activity. Any topographical material is well integrated into the context, almost to the extent of remaining unnoticed.

It is in the adoption of the speech as means of clarifying his point that Thucydides is at his most original. By

this means Thucydides sets forth the explanation and purpose of opposing views, in the same way that Herodotus used geographical and ethnological episodes to explain the ideology behind each nation. Since the opponents in the present case were also Greeks, Herodotus's approach was no longer practicable, and the speeches were used to fulfil the same purpose.

However, there are places at which Thucydides feels the need to describe the topography, of which the most noteworthy are in Book IV (Pylos and Sphacteria) where the geography dictates history, as with Thermopylae, and in Book VI, of which a major portion covers the destination of the Sicilian expedition. Thucydides himself alludes to the imperfect knowledge of Sicily generally held by his compatriots (3), almost as an excuse for his digression covering the size, peoples and history of the island. It was this ignorance which brought about the disastrous end of the expedition. Syracuse, as an important battle site, is vividly described, as the facts are essential to the narrative. (4). It may be noted at this point that Thucydides received most of his geographical information at second hand, making little or no attempt to inspect the sites for himself, although his sources were evidently reliable. Herodotus, on the other hand, was an inveterate traveller, and was often giving an eye-witness account of a scene. However, both saw that at times geography had an essential part to play in historiography. Each chose a different method of incorporating such material, and Thucydides is more discriminating, pursuing a policy of complete integration, unless the subject is too immense, as in the case of Sicily. He does not use geography as a means of entertainment, nor is it didactic as such, but exists merely as explanatory background to his historical purpose.

Turning now to Polybius of Megalopolis in Achaea, we find very different circumstances surrounding his historical work .Though he is a Greek writing for Greeks, the subject of his Histories is the beginnings of Rome's rise to power in the Western Mediterranean prior to the subjugation of Greece. This work was composed in the middle of the second century B.C., and is a mixture of retrospective history and contemporary detail of Rome and her militarism. Rome is the central figure though the events covered are widespread, and are forced to dot around in turn between regions as each becomes prominent. This work has been called the first universal history, and its scope is truly wide, far from the Greece-centred histories of earlier authors. Although the subject covered is basically that of the Punic Wars between Rome and Carthage, many other areas intrude into this conflict.

Polybius is in a fortunate position in that, though a Greek and a political hostage, he was befriended by the noble Scipiones, and was in consequence in a privileged state of freedom which enforced no restriction on movement, and he could thus spend much time visiting the places relevant to his composition, such as the Alps for their connection with Hannibal (5).

His views on the role of geography in history are expounded at III, 57-59, where he emphasises the need for relevant descriptions of sites, taken from personal experience. This can even extend to the length of an entire book (XXXIV) occupied with geography. Within the historical narrative, much detail is included, such as on Byzantium (6), or the topography of New Carthage in Spain, in preparation for the account of its capture (7), each of which are presented as block descriptions. However, the crossing of the Alps employs a different method of

portrayal, the topography being incidental to the narrative, yet nonetheless full for all that. This occupies much of Book III, and was an important source for Livy's account in Book 21.

On the whole, Polybius tends to integrate his material less than Thucydides, aware that his readers know little about the areas in question,,and feeling that this knowledge is essential. The expanse of territory with which he is concerned brings new difficulties to the field of historiography to which he found no real solution to pass down to his successors. His interests too are wide-flung, and the result of this is the production of independent blocks of writing, breaking the continuity of the narrative, as with Herodotus. Yet Polybius's sense of the importance of eye-witness and reliable sources is an advance, even if he has not fully succeeded in integrating the various essential elements of historical writing.

With these three authors, then,,we see the development of historiography through three very individual minds, each of whom placed the emphasis upon different facets, particularly in the field of geography. From the Ionian tradition of geographical treatises Herodotus produced a record of events interspersed with geo-ethnographical material, progressing to a more consistent mixture of fact and comment; Thucydides kept to the bare essentials of description, only expanding his content where the course of history was affected, while Polybius's approach, responding to different demamds, was more comprehensive. The different elements with which each author compiled his historical work were adopted to varied extents by their successors, who built upon the tradition now growing. The most important fact to be gained from this is that from the beginnings of historiography

geographical description was deemed to have a vital role; this fact was never doubted, regardless of the treatment employed.

Notes to Chapter 7

1. Cicero de Legibus I, i, 5 (pater historiae)
2. c.f. How, W.W. and Wells, J. (1912), 22-27 on the influence of previous prose writers on Herodotus.
3. Thucydides VI, 1.
4. Thucydides VI, 94ff.
5. Polybius III, 48.
6. Polybius IV, 38ff.
7. Polybius X, 10f.

Chapter 8

Geography in the Historiographical Tradition

Rome

The historians of Rome were undoubtedly greatly indebted to their Greek predecessors in their manner of presentation of historical fact. This is reflected in their use of geographical material. Some sort of tradition had been established by the Greek historians, despite their differences in approach which we saw in Chapter 7 above.

Marcus Porcius Cato (Censorius), (234-149 B.C.), was the first true historian of Rome in that he composed his work in Latin prose, rather than Greek (unlike Ennius, Fabius and others). His Origines in seven books were written over the last two decades of his life, and show a large amount of influence from the Greeks (1). However, the subject is Italy and the beginnings of civilisation in this peninsula. This necessitates the inclusion of topographical and geographical information, a theme of interest to Cato, who does not confine himself to the immediate area of Rome, but to the whole of Italy. Although much of the Origines is lost, the remaining fragments (2) are sufficient to give a reasonably clear picture of the overall contents. We find appearing the standard themes found in geographical digressions throughout the Classical period: legendary and factual history (e.g. the legend of Aeneas in Book I fr. 9:

> Aeneam cum patre ad Italiam venisse et propter invasos agros contra Latinum Turnumque pugnasse

or the foundation of Capua in III, 69); the origins of places and of peoples (e.g. II, 60 on Praeneste; II, 56 on Tibur); their mores or customs (e.g. the untrustworthy nature of the Ligures in II, 31 and 32); the methods of agriculture (II, 43),

and numerous examples, if brief, of geographical facts. It would appear that this type of material dominated the earlier books, as essential to the theme of origines, and it shows documentary precision. The geographical sections are interspersed with these other elements, and treated by Cato as inseparable, as we also find in the later Roman historians (3). The presentation is basically factual and independent, largely dictated by the subject matter. It makes no attempt to use geographical material with any further aim than this, as a necessary backing for the explanation of early Italian history. The one exception to this is perhaps IV, 85:

> Alpes - quae secundum Catonem et Livium muri vice tuebantur Italiam (Serv. ad Aen. 10, 13)

where the mountains are seen symbolically as a protection. However, this may already by this date be a literary topos, a commonplace (4), rather than a sign of Cato's originality. The Origines is rather an extention of Herodotian practices of ethnographical accounts (5), but recognising that the identity of a land such as Italy comprises several smaller yet distinct units (6).

C. Sallustius Crispus (?86-35 B.C.) dealt with subjects far closer to his own experience chronologically. In his major extant work, the Bellum Jugurthinum, he is describing the course of events which took place in North Africa some generations before. Numidia, the kingdom in question, was to become a Roman province, of which Sallust himself was the first governor in 46 B.C.,(7) with the new name of Africa Nova; despite this post, it is noteworthy that Sallust appears either ignorant or uninterested in giving much geographical background. Both possibilities seem surprising in the light of what we know about

the Histories, both from the fragments and from the comments of later writers; these books included a number of geographical digressions covering the Eastern Mediterranean, of which the best known was that de situ Ponti (III, 61-68). There were also accounts of Taurus (II, 82-84), Sardinia (II, 1-22) and probably others, though we do not have enough evidence to consider what use Sallust made of this material.

Looking back to the Bellum Iugurthinum, there is one major excursus at sections 17-19, covering the geography and peoples of Africa in a brief self-contained passage which gives little more than a rough outline of the continent. It is to some extent dictated by the context, and marks the division of Numidia between the rival kings Jugurtha and Adherbal, according to the Roman settlement. This could have ended hostilities in Africa, and it is certainly the close of the first phase of the war, before the Romans have any role other than as mediators. It serves, thus, a structural purpose, breaking up the sections of the narrative into distinct episodes. At the same time, it explains the scene of events to come, though it is too wide and digressive for direct relevance.

The actual contents of the episode include a rough description of the general shape and character of the country, followed by an account of its inhabitants, their origins and locations, but omitting any detail of the important city of Carthage (too well known from other sources?). He closes with the comment:

ad necessitudinem rei satis dictum (Jug. 19)

The facts given are not new, nor presented in an original manner nor specifically helpful to the context, except to create a hiatus before the text proceeds, while setting the mood for activities in Africa.

The ability to picture the character and give the feel of the land is seen elsewhere in the Bellum Iugurthinum, where by giving a minimum of detail the author sums up the place (a technique advanced by Tacitus). Examples of this can be found at 37 (Suthul) and 48 (River Muthul) and 92 (River Muluccha), but there are also many comments interspersed through the rest of the narrative which add imperceptably to the picture.

At sections 78-79, Sallust gives another digression, this time on the town of Lepcis, at a point which marks the end of another phase of the war (8), after the capture of Thala and shortly before Marius's election as consul, a vital turning point in Sallust's account of the war. This passage was otherwise wholly unnecessary, and the anecdote of the Carthaginian brothers still more so. Thus it can only be seen as another of the author's structural markers.

Throughout the Bellum Iugurthinum Sallust gives very few place names, and even those which are given are not explained in any relation to each other. This is confusing and even irritating in its vagueness, but does not destroy the dramatic presentation of the historical facts. The narrative moves on swiftly, and perhaps Sallust is deliberately not encumbering his account in the way that some of his predecessors (Herodotus in particular) were sidetracked into lengthy descriptions.

One more remark must be made about Sallust's treatment of geography, which is that he is deliberately making the contrast between Rome and Africa, by alternating events in each place. This is partly for the retention of the chronological presentation, but also for variety, and for an intentional contrast of emphasis on military and political affairs. The same practice can be seen in Tacitus, who is often forced to deal with several areas at a time, and thus employs large-scale contrast.

It is clear then that Tacitus's debt to Sallust must be reckoned with. Sallust, although building upon his predecessors, and especially upon Thucydides, has made further innovations in his use of geographical material, even though at the same time he has resorted to brevity and lack of precision.

From Sallust we move on to C. Julius Caesar (100-43 B.C.), whose treatment of history covered contemporary events (9) in which he himself had taken part. As a result, we can be certain that his knowledge of the areas in which events took place was first hand or based on reliable accounts by his subordinates or his scouting parties. There are a number of geographical episodes in the de Bello Gallico, the work which concerns us here, and although there have been suggestions that these are interpolated, for the purposes of this dissertation they are assumed to be genuine (10). The accounts of Britain (V, 12-14) and Germany (VI, 11-28) will be omitted as they have already been discussed in Chapters 3 and 5 in relation to Tacitus.

It must be remembered that Caesar's campaigns in Gaul marked a new stage in Roman history, as Roman territory extended. Previously, Spain had been opened up by the Punic War, but only the southern parts of Gaul were at all well known to the Romans. Thus it was essential for Caesar to ensure that the accounts of his campaigns could be understood by readers who had had no contact with north-western Europe. As a result, he opens the first of his annual commentaries by describing the country and the indigenous races of Gaul. This is a logical and essential start to the recounting of military history, and consists of a mélange of the recurrent elements of geography, ethnography and early history leading up to the present situation which is about to be described. However, although Caesar concentrates on geog-

raphical details at this point, he does not consider this initial outline to be sufficient for the whole of the de Bello Gallico, but continually adds incidental remarks on the nature of the terrain, during reports of the action (11). These pervade much of the text, often adding realism to the military framework, or helping the reader to imagine the setting, or even creating an atmosphere, as in the descriptions of the forests of Germany:

> ubi cuique aut valles abdita aut locus silvestris aut palus impedita spem praesidi aut salutis aliquam offerebat, consederat (B.G. VI, 34)

This tendency towards a picture of a hostile environment, alien and dangerous to the Romans yet a protection to the natives, is another conventional idea, to be developed still further by Tacitus in his account of Germany.

As well as integrating descriptive material in the course of the narrative, Caesar sets apart space for larger scale treatment, often in the form of a digression. This can be seen for example in the accounts of the two major battles which mark the climax of the campaigns and, as a result, of the de Bello Gallico too. Gergovia and Alesia occupy most of Book VII, paralleling each other, creating almost a peripataea with victory following so closely on Roman defeat at Gergovia. These decisive battles are comprehensively described, including a thorough presentation of the topography of each site, with a precision perhaps autrivalling any other ancient historian's description of a battle site. Apart from the actual presence of the author at the events, Caesar sees clearly that these two battles are of vital importance not only to his narrative, but to the entire history of Roman Gaul, which is to become a province as a result of Alesia. By giving a full and clear description, the account

becomes extensive and thus more memorable and important, also, incidentally, enhancing the reputation of the general (and author) himself. There could be propagandist aims in this too, and it may be noted that the retreat at Gergovia is blamed on topographical, not human faults:

iniquitas loci (VII, 53)

Nevertheless, Gergovià and Alesia are still important battles, and the descriptive elements do help to stress this fact, marking the culmination of Caesar's campaigns in Gaul.

The account of the Suebi, at IV, 1-4, though well integrated into the surrounding passages, helps to mark an event of equal importance: the first Roman crossing of the Rhine, the frontier between Gaul and Germany. This description of the Suebi shows the threat which they impose on a peaceful settlement in Gaul, by dwelling on their hostile and war-like characteristics, within a cadre of traditional ethnographical writing. It is because of this threat that Caesar must now cross the Rhine, a river which here, as elsewhere in the de Bello Gallico (12) and again later in Tacitus bears great significance as a psychological barrier (more true in the 1st century A.D. as a result of the development of the province of Gaul into a reasonably friendly area). In this the Rhine replaces the Alps as the main frontier between known and unknown, but throughout Roman times is not itself superimposed by any other geographical barrier in this part of the Empire. The digression on the Suebi delays the recording of this momentous crossing while warning of the difficulties to come (which Caesar inevitably overcomes). In the same way the excursus on Gaul and Germany (VI, 11-28) marks the second Rhine bridging, though the actual crossing is made before the ethnographical comparison, and this time we are left in suspense over

what is to happen in this new land of Germany.

Caesar, then, is a precise and thorough writer on topographical matters, using his geographical knowledge gained through first hand experience to make his narrative comprehensible, varied and informative, but also on occasions taking its use further, by developing earlier conventions to his own situation. However, his precision removes the possibility of using geography in a suggestive or impressionistic way, nor as a mental stimulus to encourage a particular reaction. Nevertheless, Caesar is more aware of the value of geography than his precursors in the field of historiography, and is indeed far more reliable than many later historians.

P. Titus Livius (59 B.C.-17 A.D. or 64 B.C.- 12 A.D.) reverts to convention and tradition in his topographical presentation. Although much of his prolific output is lost to us, there is plently of extant material from which to make judgement. The early books (I-V) concentrate upon Rome and the surrounding area, as dictated by the subject. Rome needs no explanation, amd of the named sites in the urbs the majority are large public buildings in the centre, such as the Temple of Jupiter, the Forum, the lacus Curtius (I, 13) for which Livy is explaining the origins and history. The legends of the local settlements such as Alba Longa may have been equally familiar, and by the Augustan era in which Livy was writing, the whole area was heavily populated by Roman citizens. Thus topographical description does not play an important part in the first few books. It is only when he reached Book V that it was necessary to expand and alter his treatment, as for the first time Roman history merged with the history of other parts of the world, with the invasion of the Gallic tribes in 386 B.C. Prior to recording this event, Livy gives a short digression on Etruria and Gaul (V, 33-35), foll-

owing the same convention which led Herodotus to describe the Persian Empire and Caesar Germany. It has also been suggested (13) that Livy had a structural purpose here, linking the two parts of the book as in Sallust. This invasion is the climax of the pentad, delayed by the ethnographical episode. It may be noted here that theAlps play their conventional role again as a barrier, now stated outright:

> Alpes inde oppositae erant; quas inexsuperabiles visas haud equidem miror, nulladum via, quod quidem continens memoria sit...superatas. ibi cum velut saeptos montium altitudo teneret Gallos circumspectarentque quanam per iuncto caelo iuga in alium orbem terrarum transirent (V, 34)

and also that the significance of the Gauls appearing in Rome is exaggerated by a phrase such as:

> ea tunc invisitato atque inaudito hoste ab Oceano terrarumque ultimis oris bellum ciente (V, 37)

From this point the drama can be taken to its fullest extent, as these inimical Northerners appear in tje very Forum of Rome, the heart of Roman civilisation.

Moving on to the books of Livy which cover the Second Punic War, led by Hannibal, (Books XXI-XXX), we find that Livy is now forced to cover events in three major areas: Italy (including Rome), Spain and Africa, and alternates between each in turn, while following the annalistic framework so typical of Roman historiography (see for example Book XXVII). The combatants are fighting within a known world, so that often all that is needed is the name of a place with no further explanation, as with Rome in the earlier books. Apart from Book XXI, which is exceptional, there is little concentration on topographical detail, even in the case of important battles, unless the terrain is essential to the course of events, such as at Lake Trasimene in Book XXII, or in the ambushings of XXVII, 26 and 41. Even a battle such as Cannae in Book XXII is given very little

setting. Perhaps the site itself was too well known? Spain and Africa are almost ignored, and although New Carthage, the source of hostility in Spain, is worthy of a full section of description (XXVI, 42), its host city, Carthage, warrants no such treatment.

Livy has a tendency to rhetoricise geography, both in speeches (Scipio in XXVII, 18) and during his narrative (Trasimene at XXII, 4). His aim is to entertain his readers, and he is not afraid to exaggerate if it enhances the drama and excitement of his story telling. This practice is at its height in Book XXI, the account of Hannibal crossing the Alps. It has already been pointed out that this was a standard theme in Roman times, and Livy develops it as far as possible, fully exploiting the theme. This is one place where geographical detail cannot be avoided, since the entire narrative hinges on the terrain, which is indeed formidable. Livy has frequently been accused of giving a confused and imprecise picture of Hannibal's route, and though this cannot be denied, route-mapping was not Livy's aim. To him it was not important which pass was followed through the Alps, but rather the fact that a foreign general could surmount this huge barrier which cordons off Italy from the uncivilised northern lands. Exactitude is the last requirement in this. Looking for example at XXI, 32, we find a highly rhetorical and exaggerated view of the Alps:

> tamen ex propinquo visa montium altitudo nivesque caelo prope immixtae, tecta informia imposita rupibus, pecora iumentaque torrida frigore, homines intonsi et inculti, animalia inanimaque omnia rigentia gelu, cetera visu quam dictu foediora, terrorem renovarunt.

This is a picture over-dramatised for effect, and we are not

expected to take it seriously as a piece of geographical description. The same type of treatment is found throughout Book XXI, and at other points in this decade too. The most important point is summed up by Hannibal himself in section 35:

> moeniaque eos tum transcendere non Italiae modo, sed etiam urbis Romanae.

and the crossing of the Alps marks Hannibal as an enemy to be feared and respected. Victory over the conqueror of the Alps is correspondingly more noteworthy, for this exploit proves Hannibal to be no petty leader of a foreign army, but a worthy foe for Rome. All the topographical details add to this purpose, including the exaggeration of the natural hazards and the difficulties of the route. At the same time, Livy is providing a highly dramatic and vivid picture of an army crossing the Alps, which is very appealing to the reader who is not wuibbling about exactitude and literary sign-posting.

So we see that, when he chooses, Livy can use geography to considerable effect, and that he is prepared to digress at moments where additional detail is helpful to the reader. We know that in his later books too he included some digressions, such as Book CIII on Gaul and CIV on Germany, though we have no idea what these contained. Doubtless these too were used to enliven the writing of 'dead' history, either by variety or by drama, though it would be hard to improve upon the dramatic subject of the Alpine crossing in Book XXI.

Ammianus Marcellinus (c.330-395 A.D.) could be called the last Roman historian. Like Thucydides and Caesar, he was writing of contemporary events in which he had played some part. The most noticeable geographic element in his Histories is the contrast between east and west. This feature is seen in his

model in historiography, Tacitus (e.g. Hist. V: see Chapter 2) but in Ammianus it takes on further significance through the virtual splitting of the Empire into two halves, each with a separate ruler. Rome is no longer quite so much at the centre of events, and attention focuses more on activities on the peripheries of the Empire, in this period of threats on all sides which eventually bring about the fall of Rome. Ammianus has a tendency to dwell upon one important character at a time, such as his 'hero' figure Julianus (14), and on the occurrences in the sphere of this person (for example the Gallic or Persian campaigns in Books XV and XXIII). The two halves of the Empire are often sharply juxtaposed, and deliberately so, in the paradoxical situation of a split Empire.

At frequent points during his historical work, Ammianus breaks off, in Herodotian fashion, to give what are often lengthy geographical and ethnographical digressions. Unfortunately, in this he seems to have little sense of balance, and these digressions become rather overpowering in sheer length, out of all proportion, and often of limited relevance, as with the treatment of Thrace and environs at XXII, 8. He seems to get carried away by a Plinian interest in all facts for their own sake, and even myths. However, at other times the digressions are strongly dictated by their context, even if still rather too extensive. The description of the Huns and Alauni at XXXI, 2 is in the context of the invasion of the Halani by the Huns, and these tribes were probably too distant and northern to be within the acquaintance of the average Roman. We see the conventional mixture of elements again: location, mores, physical description, showing that Ammianus is still indebted to the historiographical tradition. The same is true in Book XXIII concerning Persia, one of his longest digressions, which discusses geography, history, religion,

and so forth. This provides a large build up to Julianus's exploits in this land, which occupies all Book XXIV, ending the book and an era by his death there. Looking back to the start of his reign, Ammianus tells us of Julianus's appointment as Caesar in defence of Gaul (XV, 8), and immediately follows this by a description of Gaul and the Alps:

> proinde quoniam..."maius opus moveo"... Galliarum tractus et situm ostendere puto nunc tempestivum, ne inter procinctus ardentes, proeliorumque varios casus, ignota quibusdam expediens imitari videar desides nauticos, adtrita lintea cum rudentibus, quae licuit parari securius, inter fluctus resarcire coactus et tempestates (XV, 9, 1.)

This shows that Ammianus felt that geographical understanding was essential for the full comprehension of events, and that he did not want to have to interrupt his narrative to make the necessary explanations. This account too contains many of the standard elements, and yet again the Alps are treated with traditional respect for their height and dangers, as we have already seen so many times. Interestingly, Ammianus portrays the Alps as part of the protection of Gaul, rather than as the barrier blocking Gaul and the northern lands from the civilised peninsula of Italy:

> munimenta claudunt undique natura velut arte circumdata (XV, 10, 1)

followed by a description of the Mediterranean, the Ocean, the Rhine and the Alps, which provide these munimenta. After this passage on Gaul, we return suddenly to the East for the close of Book XV, and Book XVI begins the solid concentration on Julianus and his merits. By giving so much detail on Gaul, it is

evident that Julianus is to play an important role in future events, even if he has only just been awarded the Caesarship.

The description of Amida in XVIII, 9 is a self-conscious attempt on Ammianus's part to underline his own role in history, as he was himself at Amida at the time of the events described. The importance of the siege of Amida is, to him, considerable, and he proceeds to recount it in detail. This account leads up to the description of the siege.

It can be seen then that Ammianus Marcellinus, although still following the historiographical conventions, takes them to extremes by the length of his accounts, and is not always able to judge the relevance of the material which he includes.

We have therefore five historians working within the conventions of a particular genre, who each achieve vastly different results through their own personal approach. It is within this framework that Tacitus is writing, though his individuality is as apparent as that of his precursors. Nevertheless, the debt which he owes to earlier historians is undeniable, a statement equally true for the geographical components of his work as for any other aspects. Tacitus must be considered in the light of historiographical tradition, in any attempt to discuss his own techniques of composition, and only through comparison can Tacitus's own originality become apparent.

Notes to Chapter 8

1. Astin, A.E. (1978), 221

2. The edition used is that of Peter, H. (1883).

3. c.f. Caesar on Britain (B.G.V, 12-14); Sallust on Africa (&ug.17-19); Livy on Gaul (V, 33-35; CIII); Tacitus on Judaea (Hist. V, 1-13), Ammianus on Persia (XXIII) and numerous other examples.
   See Trüdinger, K. (1918), 21 and passim on this mélange of elements.

4. c.f. Juvenal Sat. X, 147-167:
   i, demens, et saevas curre per Alpes
   ut pueris placeas et declamatio fias (X, 166-167)

5. e.g. Herodotus Book II on Egypt.

6. Compare Tacitus Germania on this point: several different tribes compose the entity of Germany.

7. Bell. Afric. 97 gives evidence of this fact.

8. Paul, E.M. in Dorey T.A. (1966), 102.

9. It has been strongly argued e.g. by Adcock, F. (1956), 77ff. that Caesar composed each book of the de Bello Gallico annually as a commentarius to the year's campaigns, even if the actual publication came later.

10. See the arguments in favour of Caesarian authorship in Beckmann, F. (1930), 149ff.; Comissim, P. (1932), 99; Adcock, F. (1956), 96ff.

11. See for example III, 8-9 and the description of the sea coast of Gaul in connection with naval operations; here essential to clarify the campaigns but also to add to our overall picture of Gaul.

12. c.f. de Bello Gallico V,,55, where the Germans are afraid to

cross the Rhine, as it is a significant move towards hostility.

13. Ogilvie, R.M. (1965), 70.

14. There are shades of the Germanicus figure in Julianus. Notice too the similarity of the terrain which each has to face (Germany and Gaul respectively), and both the Eastern territories later.

Appendix to Chapters 7 and 8

Geographical Content in the Ancient Historians

* = Excursus

Book	Sections	Subject	Geograph. Sections		Total Sections	%
Herodotus						
I	75-76	R. Halys, Cappadocia	2			
	80	Plain of Sardis	1			
	*93-94	Lydia	2			
	99	Ecbatana	1	-35	216	16%
	*142-151	Ionian lands	10			
	174	Cnidian Isthmus	1			
	*178-192	Babylon, Euphrates	15			
	*202-204	Caspian Sea	3			
II	*1-182	Egypt	182		182	100%
III	*97-117	India, Arabia	21		160	13%
IV	*18-117	Black Sea regions	100	-131	205	64%
	*168-198	Lydia	31			
V	3-10	Thrace	8	-13	126	10%
	49-53	Road to Susa	5			
VI	33	Hellespont	1		140	1%
VII	22-23	Mt. Athos Canal	2			
	108-129	Xerxes' march into Greece	12			
	175-177	Thermopylae, Artemisium	3	-30	239	13%
	199-200	Trachis	2			
	215-225	Track to Thermopylae, battle	11			
VIII	52-55	Athens and Acropolis	4		144	3%
IX	26	Plataea	1		122	1%
			418		1534	

$\frac{418}{1534}$ = 27%

Thucydides						
I	*2-19	Hellas: introd. survey	18	-23	146	16%
	*89-93	Athens, Piraeus	5			

Thucydides contd.

Book	Sections	Subject	Geograph. Sections		Total Sections	%
II	9	Allied Greek cities	1			
	*13-17	Athens	5			
	27	Aegina and Thyrea	1	24	103	23%
	47-55	Plague at Athens	9			
	83-84	Corinth Coast	2			
	*96-101	Thrace	6			
III	15	Corinth, isthmus	1			
	88-93	Heraclea	6	11	116	9%
	103-105	Inessa, Delos	3			
	116	Etna	1			
IV	3-9	Pylos, Sphacteria	7	25	135	19%
	24-41	Messina, Pylos	18			
V	25-26	Mantinea	2		116	2%
VI	*1-6	Sicily	6	13	105	12%
	96-102	Syracuse	7			
VII	36-37	Great Harbour, Syracuse	2			
	59-60	" " "	2	8	87	9%
	78-81	Sicily	4			
VIII	-	-	0		109	0%
			106		917	

$\frac{106}{917}$ = 12%

Polybius (based on Books I-III)

I	37	Sicily	1			
	*41-42	"	2	4	64	6%
	55	Eryx	1			
II	13	New Carthage	1	23	71	32%
	*14-35	Italy and Gaul	22			
III	17	Saguntum	1			
	34-38	Alps	5			
	39	N. Africa, Carthage	1			
	41-56	Rhone and Alps	16			
	57-59	Polybius's view of role of geog. in hist.	3	33	118	28%
	71	Trebbia, ambush	1			
	82-83	Lake Trasimene	2			
	90-92	Samnite Capua	3			
	110	R. Aufidius, Cannae	1			
			60		253	

Polybius contd. $\frac{60}{253}$ = 24%

Cato (based on the surviving fragments as listed by Peter, H.)

Fragments: 31, 32, 34, 37, 38, 39, 40, 42, 43, 44, 45, 48, 50, 52, 56, 57, 60, 69, 74, 76, 85, 93, 95, 110 contain geographical material, antotal of 24 fragments out of 144 listed.

$\frac{24}{144}$ = 17%

Sallust

Book	Sections	Subject	Geograph. Sections		Total Sections	%
Catiline	-	-	0		61	0%
Jugurtha	16	Division of Numidia	1			
	*17-19	Africa	3			
	21	Cirta	1			
	23	Cirta	1			
	28	Africa	1			
	37	Suthul	1			
	47	Vaga	1			
	48-54	R. Muthul area	7	27	114	24%
	55	African topography	1			
	57	Zama	1			
	75-76	Thala and desert	2			
	*78-79	Lepcis	2			
	89	Capsa	1			
	90	R. Tanais	1			
	92-94	R. Muluccha	3			
			27		175	

$\frac{27}{175}$ = 15%

Caesar De Bello Gallico

Book	Sections	Subject	Geograph. Sections		Total Sections	%
I	*1-6	Gaul: introductory	6			
	8	Lake Geneva	1			
	12	R. Arar (Saône)	1			
	31	Rhine, invasion of Gaul by Germans	1	10	54	19%
	38	Vesontio, R. Dubis	1			
II	8-10	R. Axona, battle	3		35	9%
III	8-9	Sea coast of Gaul	2			
	12	" " " "	1	3	28	11%
IV	*1-4	Suebi	4			
	10	Meuse, Waal, Rhine	1			
	17	Rhine Bridge	1	8	38	21%
	20	Britain	1			
	23	Dover	1			
V	3	Ardennes forest	1			
	9	Britain	1			
	11	R. Thames	1			
	*12-14	Britain	3	8	58	14%
	18	R. Thames	1			
	55	Rhine	1			
VI	9	Rhine	1			
	10	Suebi land	1	20	44	45%
	*11-28	Gaul compared to Germany	18			
VII	34-36	Gergovia battle site	3			
	44-46	" " "	3	8	90	9%
	68-69	Alesia battle site	2			
			60		347	

$\frac{60}{347}$ = 17%

Livy

I	13	Lacus Curtius	1			
	29	Growth of Rome, Mons Caelius	1	4	60	7%
	44	Pomerium	1			
	56	Cloaca Maxima	1			
II	9	Temple of Jupiter	1		65	2%
III	-	-	0		72	0%

Livy contd.

Book	Sections	Subject	Geograph. Sections		Total Sections	%
IV	-	-	0		61	0%
V	20-21	Veii	2			
	*32-35	Gaul	4	7	55	13%
	40	Arx, Rome	1			
XXI	23,27,29	Alps	3			
	30	Pyrenees, Rhône	1			
	31-38	Route across Alps	8			
	39	Alps	1	18	63	29%
	40, 43, 44	Alps: rhetorical use	3			
	54	Trebia battle site	1			
	58	Apennines	1			
XXII	4-6	Trasimene	3			
	43-44	Cannae	2	5	61	8%
XXIII	30	Croton	1		48	2%
XXIV	2-3	Croton, Temple of Juno	2			
	9	R. Tiber floods	1	4	48	8%
	47	Arpi	1			
XXV	11	Tarentum	1			
	13	Beneventum battle site	1	3	40	8%
	36	Spain	1			
XXVI	*42-46	New Carthage	5		51	10%
XXVII	18	Spain	1			
	26-27	Venusia battle site	2			
	35	Italy: consular areas	1	6	51	12%
	39	Alps (Hasdrubal)	1			
	41	Venusia ambush	1			
XXVIII	17	Africa (Syphax's land)	1			
	37	Balearic Isles	1	7	46	15%
	40-44	Africa: rhetorical use	5			
XXIX	27	African coastline	1			
	33-34	" "	2	3	38	8%
XXX	30	Africa, limits of Carthage	1		45	2%
		Total Books I-V	12		313	4%
		Total Books XXI-XXX	53		491	11%
			65		804	

$\frac{65}{804}$ = 8%

Tacitus

Book	Sections	Subject	Geograph. Sections		Total Sections	%
Agricola	*10-12	Britain	3			
	18	Mona	1			
	22-23	N. Britain	2			
	*24	Ireland	1	—10	46	20%
	25	N. Britain	1			
	*28	Journey of Usipi	1			
	38	Circumnavigation of Britain	1			
Germania	1-5	Gen. survey of Germany	5			
	16	Habitation	1	—25	46	54%
	28-46	Individual tribes and areas	19			
Histories						
I	8-11	Survey of Roman World	4			
	27,31,33,	Rome	3			
	40-43	Rome	4			
	61	Alps	1	—16	90	18%
	65	S. Gaul	1			
	70	Alps	1			
	79	Moesia	1			
	86	Rome	1			
II	2-4	Titus' journey, Paphos Jerusalem	3			
	6	Contrast E v. W	1			
	11-15	Po valley, Alps, Gaul	5			
	17-19	N. Italy	3			
	21-25	Towns in N. Italy	5	—32	101	32%
	34-36	Po bridge	3			
	39-44	Bedriacum battle site	6			
	78	Mt. Carmel	1			
	83	The East, Byzantium	1			
	89, 93,95	Rome	3			
	98	Alps	1			
III	6	N. Italy	1			
	8-9	Verona, N. Italy	2			
	15	Cremona	1			
	17-21	Cremona	5			
	30-35	Cremona	6	—28	86	33%
	42	Division of Italy	1			
	57	N. Italy	1			
	68-74	Rome	7			
	82-85	Rome	4			
IV	12	Germany: Batavian land	1			
	15-16	Germany	2			
	22-23	Castra Vetera	2			
	26	R. Rhine	1			
	28	N. Gaul and Rhine	1			
	53	Rome	1			
	63-65	Cologne	3			
	66	R. Maas	1			

Tacitus Hist. contd.

Book	Sections	Subject	Geograph. Sections		Total Sections	%
IV contd.						
	70-72	Rhine and Alps, Mainz, Trier	3	19	86	22%
	75-77	Trier	3			
	79	Trier	1			
V	*1-8	Judaea, Jerusalem	8			
	*10-13	Judaea, Jerusalem	4	20	26	77%
	14-20	Vetera, Rhine	7			
	23	Maas, Rhine	1			
			115		389	30%
Annals						
I	49-51	Rhine crossing	3			
	56	Chatti land, Mattium	1			
	59	Germany: rhetorical use	1	18	81	22%
	60-70	Penetration of Germany, coast	11			
	76	Rome, floods	1			
	79	River diversions, Rome	1			
II	3	Armenia	1			
	5-25	Germany, Weser, Idistaviso North Sea (storm)	21			
	53-56	Germanicus in East, Armenia	4	30	88	34%
	59-61	Germanicus in Egypt	3			
	64	Thrace	1			
III	59	Drusus in Campania: political use	1			
	61	Eleusis	1	3	76	4%
	72	Rome: building	1			
IV	24	Numidia	1			
	33	Tacitus's view of role of geography	1			
	45	Spain	1			
	46-51	Thrace	6	15	75	20%
	59	Cave at Spelunca	1			
	64-65	Rome: fire on Mons Cael.	2			
	67	Capri	1			
	72-75	Rhineland	4			
V	-	-	0		11	0%
VI	33-37	Armenia	5	6	51	12%
	45	Rome, fire	1			
XI	8	Seleucia	1			
	10	Armenia	1			
	13	Rome: Claudius' aqueduct	1	5	38	13%
	19-20	Retreat from Rhine, Meuse-Rhine canal	2			

Tacitus Annals contd.

Book	Sections	Subject	Geograph. Sections		Total Sections	%
XII	12-14	Eastern provinces	3			
	15-20	Bosphorus	6			
	23-24	Rome: Pomerium	2			
	31-35	Britain	5			
	38-40	Britain	3	-23	69	33%
	55	Cilicia	1			
	56	Fucine Lake, Italy	1			
	62-63	Byzantium	2			
XIII	38-41	Armenia	4			
	53	Germany, Saone-Moselle canal plan	1			
	54-56	Frisian land, Rhineland	3	-9	58	15%
	57	Germans fight over river, fire at Cologne	1			
XIV	4-6	Bay of Naples	3			
	8-9	Bay of Naples	2			
	15	Rome: Naumachia of Aug.	1	-20	65	31%
	23-27	Armenia, Tigranocerta	5			
	29-37	Britain: Mona, Camulodunum	9			
XV	7-17	Armenia	11			
	26-28	Armenia	3			
	38-43	Rome: Great Fire	6	-21	74	28%
	58	Rome 'under siege'	1			
XVI	-	-	0		74	0%
			150		760	19%

Total proportion of Tacitus 300 1241

$\frac{300}{1241}$ = 24%

Ammianus Marcellinus

XIIII	*3, 3-4	Batria	2			
	*4, 1-7	Saracens	7	-24	171	14%
	*8, 1-15	Taurus, Cilicia, East	15			
XV.	*4, 1-10	Germans	10		159	
	9, 1-10,11	Gaul and Alps	19	-29		17%

Ammianus Marcellinus contd.

Book	Sections	Subject	Geograph. Sections		Total Sections	%
XVI	-	-	0		179	0%
XVII	-	-	0		185	0%
XVIII	*9, 1-4	Amida	4		103	4%
XVIIII	-	-	0		130	0%
XX	-	-	0		145	0%
XXI	*10, 3-4	Thrace and Illyricum	2		156	1%
XXII	*8, 1-48 *15, 1-32 *16, 1-24	Thrace Egypt Egypt	48 32 24	104	209	50%
XXIII	*6, 1-87	Persi	87		152	57%
XXIIII	-	-	0		127	0%
XXV	-	-	0		162	0%
XXVI	-	-	0		134	0%
XXVII	*4, 1-14	Thrace	14		140	10%
XXVIII	-	-	0		160	0%
XXVIIII	-	-	0		163	0%
XXX	-	-	0		126	0%
XXXI	*2, 1-5, 17	Humni and Alauni	63		203	31%
			327		2804	

$\frac{327}{2804} = 12\%$

(Omitting Books with no geographical content:

$\frac{327}{1293} = 25\%$

Results Tabulated for Comparison

Herodotus	27%
Thucydides	12%
Polybius (based on Books 1-III)	24%
Cato (based on surviving fragments)	17%
Sallust (*Catiline* 0%; *Jugurtha* 24%)	15%
Caesar (*de Bello Gallico*)	17%
Livy (I-V 4%; XXI-XXX 11%)	8%
Tacitus (*Agr.* 20%; *Germ.* 54%; *Hist.* 30% *Ann.* 19%)	24%
Ammianus Marcellinus (relevant books 25%)	12%

These figures have been worked out on the basis that each section included incorporates material of some geographical significance. However, the proportion of each section covering geography varies greatly in each case, from short remarks to an entire section spent on description.

Geographical Content in the Ancient Historians by Area.

The Western Mediterranean

1. Germany

Caesar B.G. I, 31
IV, 1-4
10
17
V, 55
VI, 9-10
11-28

Tacitus Agr. 28
Germ. passim
Hist. IV, 12
15-16
22-23
26
28
63-66
70-72
75-77
79
V, 14-20
23
Ann. I, 49-51
56
59
60-70
II, 5-25
IV, 72-73
XI, 19-20
XIII, 53-57

Ammianus
Marcellinus XVI, 4, 1-10
XXXI, 2, 1-5, 17

---

2. Britain

Caesar B.G. IV, 20
23
V, 9
11-14
18

Tacitus Agr. passim
Ann. XII, 31-35
38-40
XIV 29-37

---

3. Gaul

Polybius II, 14-35
III, 41-56

Cato fr. 31, 32, 34, 39, 42, 93.

Caesar B.G. passim

Livy V, 32-35
XXI, 30

Tacitus Hist.
I, 65
II, 11-15
IV, 28

Amm, Marc.
XV, 9, 1-8

---

4. Alps

Polybius III, 34-38
41-56

Cato fr. 38, 41, 85

Livy XXI, 23
27
29
31-40
43-44
XXVII, 39

Tacitus Hist. I, 61
70
II, 11-15
98
IV, 70-72

Ammianus XV 10, 1-11

---

5. Italy

Polybius II, 14-35
III, 71
82-83
90-92
110

Cato passim

Livy passim

Tacitus Hist. II, 11-15
17-19
21-25
34-36
39-44
III, 6
8-9
15
17-21
30-35
42
57
Ann. III, 59
IV, 59
67
XII, 56
XIV, 4-6
8-9

---

6. Rome

Livy	I,	13
		29
		44
		56
	II,	9
	V,	40
	XXIV,	9
Tacitus Hist.	I,	27
		31
		33
		40-43
		86
	II,	89
		93
		95
	III,	68-74
		82-85
	IV,	53
Ann.	I,	76
		79
	III,	72
	IV,	64-65
	VI,	45
	XI,	13
	XII,	23-24
	XIV,	15
	XV,	38-43
		58

---

7. Sicily

Thucydides	III,	116
	IV,	24-41
	VI,	1-6
		96-102
	VII,	36-37
		59-60
		78-81
Polybius	I,	37
		41-42
		55
	VIII,	3
Cato fr.	56, 83	

---

8. Spain

Polybius	II,	13
	III,	17
	X,	10-11
Livy	XXV,	36
	XXVI,	42-46
	XXVII,	18
Tacitus Ann.	IV,	45

---

9. Africa

Polybius	III,	39
Sallust Jug.	passim	
Livy	XXVIII,	17, 40-44
	XXIX,	27, 33-34
	XXX,	30
Tacitus Ann.	IV,	24

The Eastern Mediterranean

10. Greece

Herodotus	VII,	22-23
		108-129
		175-177
		199-200
		215-225
	IX,	26
Thucydides	I,	2-19
	II,	9
		27
		83-84
	III,	15
		88-93
		103-105
	IV,	3-9
		24-41
	V,	25-26
Tacitus Ann.	III,	61

---

11. Athens

Herodotus	VIII,	52-55
Thucydides	I,	89-93
	II,	13-17

---

12. Thrace

Herodotus	V,	3-10
Thucydides	II,	96-101
Tacitus Ann.	II,	64
	IV,	46-51
Ammianus	XXI,	10, 3-4
Marcellinus	XXII,	8, 1-48
	XXVII,	4, 1-14

---

13. Byzantium

Polybius	IV,	38-45
Tacitus Hist.	II,	83
Ann.	XII,	62-63

---

14. Asia Minor

Herodotus	I,	75-76
		80
		93-94
		142-151
		174
	IV,	168-198
Tacitus Ann.	XII,	55
Ammianus Marcellinus	XIIII,	8, 1-15

---

15. Black Sea

Herodotus	I,	202-204
	IV,	18-117
	VI,	33
Tacitus Ann.	XII,	15-20

---

16. Armenia

Tacitus Ann.	II,	3
		53-56
	VI,	33-37
	XI,	10
	XIII,	38-41
	XIV,	23-27
	XV,	7-17
		26-28

---

17. Judaea

Tacitus Hist.	II,	2-4
		78
	V,	1-8
		10-13

---

18. Egypt

Herodotus	II,	1-182
Tacitus Ann.	II,	59-61
Ammianus Marc.	XXII,	15, 1-32
		16, 1-24

---

19. The East

Herodotus	I,	99
		178-192
	III,	97-117
	V,	49-53
Tacitus Ann.	XI,	8
	XII,	12-14
Ammianus Marc.	XIIII,	3, 3-4
		4, 1-7
		8, 1-15
	XVIII,	9, 1-4
	XXIII,	6, 1-87

Conclusion

Tacitus was sensitive to the ability of geographical detail not merely to elucidate events, but also to develop and strengthen particular themes and ideas running through his work. His use of geography is selective, limited to the sections of his historical writing where it can serve a useful or evocative purpose, whether structural, emotive or explanatory. Although greatly influenced by the practices of earlier historians, Tacitus evolved an individual literary approach to the employment of geographical material, often requiring the subject to be perceived on two levels, so that the factual content has a secondary aim. This approach increases in subtlety through the course of his writing, at the same time as he learns to avoid the convention of a separate excursus, and turns to the deliberate integration of geographical material into the narrative. Thus Tacitus is carefully exploiting geography to his own ends, forbidding its intrusion into the dramatic continuity of his historical work except at points where its inclusion serves a particular purpose.

Editions of Classical Texts Used

Tacitus		Editor
Agricola	Cornelii Taciti de vita Agricolae	Ogilvie, R.M. and Richmond, I.A. Oxford 1967
	Loeb edition of the minor works	Ogilvie, R.M. and Winterbottom, M. London, 1970
Germania	Cornelii Taciti de origine et moribus Germanorum	Sleeman, J.H. Cambridge, 1933
Histories	Cornelii Taciti historiarum libri O.C.T.	Fisher, C.D. Oxford, 1977
	Loeb edition	Moore, C.H. London, 1979
Annals	Cornelii Taciti annalium ab excessu Divi Augusti libri O.C.T.	Fisher, C.D. Oxford, 1977
	Loeb edition	Moore, C.H. London, 1979

Author	Edition	Editor	
Herodotus	Loeb	Godley, A.D.	London, 1922
Hippocrates (Influences)	Loeb	Jones, W.H.S.	London, 1931
Josephus	(Trans.)	Whiston, W.	London, 1878
Polybius	Loeb	Paton, W.R.	London, 1960
Strabo	Loeb	Jones, H.L.	London, 1969
Thucydides	Loeb	Smith, C.F.	London, 1975

Ammianus Marcellinus	Teubner	Gardthausen, V.	Stuttgart 1966
Cato in H.R.R.	Teubner	Peter, H.	Lipsiae, 1914
Caesar (de Bello Gallico)	Loeb	Edwards, H.J.	London, 1930
Juvenal	O.C.T.	Clausen, W.V.	Oxford, 1977
Livy	O.C.T.	Conway, R.S.	Oxford, 1936

Pomponius Mela	Teubner	Frick, C.	Stuttgart, 1967
Pliny the Elder	Loeb	Rackham, H.	London, 1969
Pliny the Younger	Loeb	Melmoth, W. (rev. Hutchinson, W.M.L.)	London, 1923
Sallust Jugurtha	Loeb	Rolfe, J.C.	London, 1960
Fragments		Maurenbrecher, B.	Lipsiae, 1891
Suetonius	Loeb	Rolfe, C.J.	London, 1924
Velleius Paterculus in The Tiberian Narrative		Woodman, A.J.	Cambridge, 1977

List of Works Consulted

Abbreviations employed:

A.F.L.N.	Annali della facolta di lettere e filosofia dell' universita di Napoli
A.J.	Archaeological Journal
A.J.Ph.	American Journal of Philology
B.A.R.	British Archaeological Reports
B.J.	Bonner Jahrbücher
C.J.	Classical Journal
C.Q.	Classical Quarterly
C.R.	Classical Review
C.S.D.I.R.	Centro studi et documentazione sull' Italia romana
H.R.R.	Historicorum Romanorum Reliquiae collegit...H. Peter.
H.S.C.P.	Harvard Studies in Classical Philology
J.R.S.	Journal of Roman Studies
N.J.	Neue Jahrbücher
L.E.	Latin Explorations
P.C.Ph.S	Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society
P.S.A.S.	Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland
R.E.J.	Revue des Etudes Juives
R.E.L.	Revue des Etudes Latines

Rh.M. Rheinisches Museum

R. Ph. Revue de Philologie

T.A.M.S. Transactions of the Ancient Monuments Society

Adcock, F.E. Caesar as Man of Letters Cambridge, 1956

Anderson, J.G.C.(Ed.)Tacitus: Germania Oxford. 1938

Arnaldi, F. "Il continuatore di Tacito" Rend. della Acc. di. Arch. Lett. e Belle Arti di Napoli, XLII, (1967), 103-154.

Arnaldi, F. Tacito (Mem. Acad. di Arch. Lett. e Belle Arti di Napoli 6) Napoli, 1973

Astin, A.E. Cato the Censor Oxford, 1978

Bardon, H. La Littérature Latine Inconnue Paris, 1952-56

Beaujeu, J. "Le Mare Rubrum de Tacite et le problème de la chronologie des Annales" R.E.L.38 (1960),200-235

Beckmann, F. Geographie und Ethnographie in Cäsars Bellum Gallicum Dortmund, 1930

Benario, H.W. An Introduction to Tacitus Athens, Geogria, 1975

Brink, C.O. "Tacitus and the Visurgis, a gloss in the first book of the Annals" J.R.S. XLII,(1952), 39-42

Bunbury, E.H. A History of Ancient Geography London, 1879

Burn, A.R. "Mare pigrum et grave" C.R. 63, (1949), 94

Burn, A.R. "In search of a battlefield: Agricola's last battle" P.S.A.S. lxxxvii, (1953), 127-133

Burn, A.R. "Tacitus on Britain" in Tacitus Studies ed. Dorey, T.A., 35-61 London, 1969

Cary, M. The Geographic Background of Greek and Roman History Oxford, 1949

Casson, L. Travel in the Ancient World London, 1974

Chevallier, R. "Rome et la Germanie au 1er siècle de notre ère" Coll. Latomus LIII, (1961), 5-48

Chilver, G.E.F. A Historical Commentary on Tacitus's Histories I and II Oxford, 1979

Couissin, P. "Tacite et César" R.Ph.6 (1932), 97-117

Crawford, O.G.S. The Topography of Roman Scotland North of the Antonine Wall Cambridge, 1949

D'Arms, J.H. Romans on the Bay of Naples Camb. Mass. 1970

Dion, R. "Rhenus Bicornis" R.E.L. XLII, (1964), 469-499

Dorey, T.A.(Ed.) Studies in Latin Literature: Latin Historians London, 1966

Dorey, T.A. (Ed.) Studies in Latin Literature: Tacitus London, 1969

Dudley, D.R. Urbs Roma London, 1967

Dudley, D.R. The World of Tacitus London, 1968

Egli, E. "Feldzüge in Armenien von 41-63n.Chr." Budinger's Untersuchungen zur Römischen Kaisergeschichte Vol I, 267-362 Leipzig,,1868

Eymer, K. "Cäsar und Tacitus über die Germanen" N.J.XXXII,(1913), 24-47

Fabia, P. "Pline l'Ancien a-t-il assisté au siège de Jérusalem par Titus?" R.Ph.(1892), 149-155

Fabia, P. Les Sources de Tacite Paris, 1893

Feachem, R. "Mons Craupius = Duncrub?" Antiquity XLIV, (1970), 120-124

Février, P.A. "Remarques sur la géographie historique des Alpes Méridionales" C.S.D.I.R. VII,(1975-1976), 269-300

Finley, J.H. Thucydides London, 1947

Frere, S.S. and St. Joseph, J.K. "The Roman Fortress at Longthorpe" Britannia V, (1974), 1-129

Furneaux, H. The Annals of Tacitus (Comm.) Oxford, 1896

Gell, W. (revision of Bunbury) The Topography of Rome and its vicinity London, 1846

Gelzer, M. Caesar, Politician and Statesman Oxford, 1968

George, H.B. The Relations of Geography and History Oxford, 1907

Gomoll, H. "Silva caesia: geschichte eines topographischen problems" (Ann.I, 50) Rh.M. LXXXVII, (1938), 177-188

Goodyear, F.D.R. Tacitus (Greece and Rome,4) Oxford, 1970

Goodyear, F.D.R. The Annals of Tacitus (Vol. I) Cambridge, 1972

Gordon, M.L. "The Patria of Tacitus" J.R.S.XXVI,(1936), 145-151

Gorrichon, M. "La Bretagne dans la Vie d'Agricola de Tacite" Mélanges Dion 191-205

Grant, M. The Ancient Historians, London, 1970

Grant, M. The Jews in the Roman World London, 1973

Gudeman, A. (Ed.) Taciti de vita Iulii Agricolae and de Germania Berlin, 1902 Boston, 1950

Hanson, W.S. and Keppie, L.J.F. "Roman Frontier Studies 1979" B.A.R. 7,1(i),1980

Henderson-Stewart, D. "The Battle of Mons Graupius" T.A.M.S. 8, (1960), 75-88

Hind, J.G.F. "Agricola's fleet and Portus Trucculensis" Britannia V, (1974), 285-288

How, W.W. and Wells, J. A Commentary on Herodotus Oxford, 1912

Iacopi, G. Il ritrovamenti dell'antro cosidetto 'di Tiberio' a Sperlonga Rome, 1958

Jansen, A.M.A.H.- Tacitus Over de Joden (Eng. summary, 183-205) Groningen-Batavia, 1949

Jarrett, M.G. "Early Roman Campaigns in Wales" A.J.121, 1964, 23-39

John, W. "Die Örtlichkeit der Varusschlacht bei Tacitus" Niedersächs Jahrb. für Landesgesch. XX, (1947), 112-118

Katzoff, R. "Where was Agrippina murdered?" Historia XXII, (1973), 72-78

Keitel, E. "The Role of Parthia and Armenia in Tacitus Annals 11 and 12" A.J.Ph. XCIX, (1978) 462-473

Kessler, G. Die Tradition über Germanicus Berlin, 1905

Köstermann, E. "Die Feldzüge des Germanicus 14-16n.Chr." Historia 6 (1957), 429-479

Köstermann, E. "Tacitus und die Transpadana" Athenaeum, 43, (1965), 167-208

Lacey, W.K. "Oblongae Scutulae vel Bipenni: Agricola 10, 3" P.C.Ph.S., 183 (1954-5),16-20

Lacey, W.K. "Some use of primus in naval contexts" C.Q. 51, (1957), 118-122

Lévy, I. "Tacite et l'origine du peuple juif" Latomus (Mélanges Gilbert Heuten),1946, 331-340

Liebeschuetz, W. "The theme of Liberty in the Agricola of Tacitus" C.Q.16, (1966), 126-139

Lundström, V. "Det Första Kapitlet i Tacitus' Germania" Eranos, XXV, (1927), 249-264

Maiuri, A. The Phlegraean Fields Rome, 1958

Marchesi, C. Tacito Roma, 1924

Marsh, F.B. The Reign of Tiberius London, 1931

Martin, R. Tacitus London, 1981

Mattingly, H.(Trans) Tacitus on Britain and Germany Middlesex, 1948

Mendell, C.W. Tacitus, the Man and his Work London, 1957

Mensching, E. "Zu den namentlichen Zitaten in Tacitus' Historien und Annalen" Hermes XCV,(1967),457-469

Miller, N.P. "Style and Content in Tacitus" in Tacitus Studies ed. Dorey, T.A. 99-115 London, 1969

Miller, S.N. "The Fifth Campaign of Agricola" J.R.S. XXXVIII, (1948), 15-19

Miltner, F. "Der Tacitusbericht über Idistaviso" Rh.M. XCV (1952), 343-356

Mommsen, T. "Eine Inschrift der Alteren Plinius" Hermes XIX, (1884), 644-648

Mommsen, T. Die Örtlichkeit der Varusschlacht Berlin, 1885

Mommsen, T. The Provinces of the Roman Empire from Caesar to Diocletian (Trans. Dickson,W) London, 1909

Münzer, F. "Die Quelle des Tacitus für die Germanerkriege" B.J.(1899), 67-111

Neugebauer, O. A History of Ancient Mathematical Astronomy New York,1975

Norden, E. Die Germanische Urgeschichte in Tacitus' Germania Leipzig-Berlin 1923

Ogilvie, R.M. A Commentary on Livy Books I-V Oxford, 1965

Ogilvie, R.M. and Richmond, I.A. Cornelii Taciti de vita Agricolae Oxford, 1967

Ogilvie, R.M. and Winterbottom, M. Tacitus's Minor Works (Loeb) London, 1970

Oppermann, H. "Zu den geographischen Excursen in Caesars Bellum Gallicum" Hermes 68,(1933), 182-195

Paratore, E. Tacito Milano, 1951

Passerini, A. "Le due battaglie presso Betriacum" Studi di antichita classica offerti a Emanuele Ciaceri Roma-Napoli, 1940, 178-248

Pauly-Wissowa — Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumwissenschaft in alphabetischer Ordnung 1839-1852

Pearson, L. — "Thucydides and the Geographical Tradition" C.Q.33 (1939), 48-54

Questa, C. — Studi sulle fonti degli Annales di Tacito Roma, 1960

Quinn, K. — "Tacitus's Narrative Technique" in L.E. 110-129 London, 1963

Rademacher, U. — Die Bildkunst des Tacitus Hildesheim-N.York 1975 (Spudasmata Band XXIX)

Ramsay, G.G. (Trans) — The Histories of Tacitus London, 1915

Reed, N.J. — "The Fifth Year of Agricola's Campaigns" Britannia II,(1971), 143-148

Reed, N.J. — "Three fragments of Livy concerning Britain" Latomus XXXII,(1973),766-785

Reed, N.J. — "The Sources of Tacitus and Dio for the Boudiccan revolt" Latomus XXXIII,(1974), 926-933

Reed, N.J. — "Agricola 24.2" C.Q.XXVI, 1976, 115

Richmond, I.A. — "Gnaeus Iulius Agricola" J.R.S.34, 1944,34-45

Rickman, G.E. — Roman Granaries and Store Buildings Cambridge, 1971

Rose, H.J. — A Handbook of Greek Mythology London, 1960

St. Joseph, J.K. — "Aerial Reconnaissance in Wales" Antiquity XXXV, 1961, 269-273

St. Joseph, J.K. — "The camp at Durno, Aberdeenshire, and the site of Mons Graupius" Britannia IX, 1978,271-287

Schetter, W. and Uslar, R.v. — "Zu den pontes longi" Gymnasium LXXVIII, 1971, 201-224

Selincourt, A. de — The World of Herodotus London, 1962

Shepherd, W.R. — Historical Atlas New York, 1964

Simpson, G. — Britons and the Roman Army London, 1964

Smith, W. A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geography London, 1854-57

Spooner, W.A. Cornelii Taciti Historiarum libri qui supersunt London, 1891

Syme, R. "Tacitus on Gaul" Latomus XII, 1953, 25-37

Syme, R. Tacitus Oxford, 1958

Syme, R. Sallust Cambridge, 1964

Syme, R. "Pliny the Procurator" H.S.C.Ph. LXXIII, (1969), 201-236

Syme, R. Ten Studies in Tacitus Oxford, 1970

Ternes, C.M. "Recherches concernant la Gaule et les Germanies" R.E.L.LVI, (1978), 226-271

Thiaucourt, C. "Ce que Tacite dit des Juifs" R.E.J.19, (1889)

Thompson, E.A. The Historical Work of Ammianus Marcellinus Cambridge, 1947

Thomson, J.O. History of Ancient Geography Cambridge, 1948

Tibullo, G. "Da Tacito ad Ammiano Marcellino" A.F.L.N. 12 (1969-1970), 87-103

Toynbee, A.J. Greek Historical Thought New York, 1952

Tozer, H.F. A History of Ancient Geography Cambridge, 1897

Tozzi, P. "Tacito e la geografia della valle del Po" Athenaeum XLVIII, (1970), 104-131

Trüdinger, K. Studien zur Geschichte der griechisch-römischen Ethnographie Basel, 1918

Usher, S. The Historians of Greece and Rome London, 1969

Vianey, J. Quomodo dici possit Tacitum fuisse summum pingendi artificem Paris, 1896

Walbank, F.W. Polybius Oxford, 1979

Walker, B. The Annals of Tacitus: a study in the writing of history Manchester, 1952

Walsh, P.G. Livy: his historical aims and methods Cambridge, 1963

Weber, W.E. Josephus und Vespasian, Untersuchungen zu d. jüdischen Krieg d. Flavius Josephus Berlin 1921

Welch, G.P. Britannia: the Roman Conquest and Occupation of Britain Connect.1963

Wellesley, K. "Can you trust Tacitus?" Greece and Rome N.S. I, (1954), 13-35

Wellesley, K. Review of Ogilvie/Richmond (1967) J.R.S.LIX, (1969), 266-269

Wellesley, K. "Tacitus as a Military Historian" in Tacitus Studies ed. Dorey, T.A., 63-97 London, 1969

White, A.N. Sherwin- Racial Prejudice in Imperial Rome Cambridge, 1967

Wightman, E.M. Roman Trier and the Treviri London, 1970

Wilkinson, L.P. Golden Latin Artistry Cambridge, 1963

Woodman, A.J. Velleius Paterculus: the Tiberian Narrative Cambridge, 1977

Woodman, A.J. and West, D.A. Creative Imitation and Latin Literature Cambridge, 1979

Work, I. "Britain and the Britons as described by Tacitus and others" C.J.XLIX, (1953-54), 255-25